

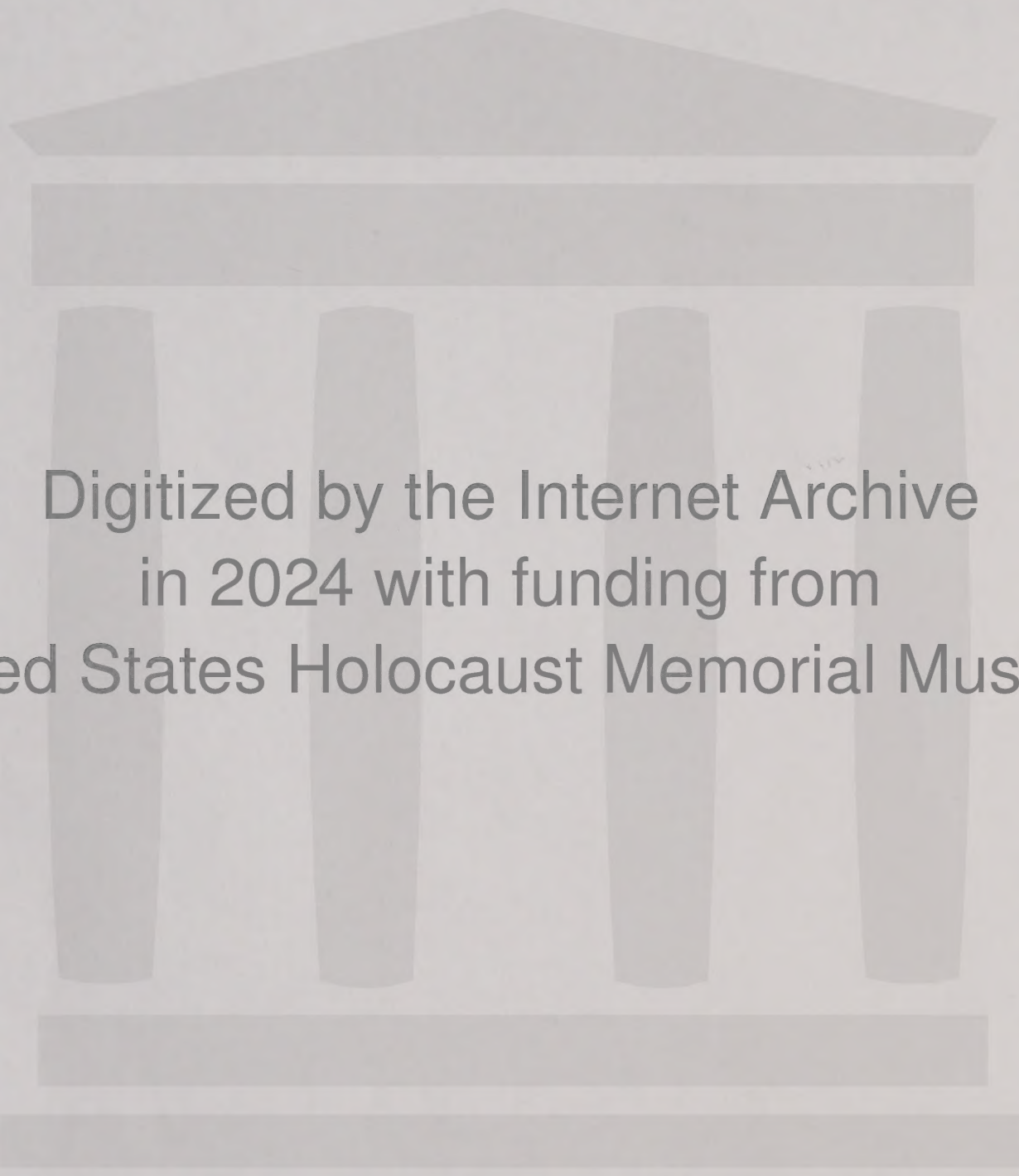


ועידת התביעות
Claims Conference
Conference on Jewish Material Claims
Against Germany

Claims Conference Holocaust Survivor Memoir Collection

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONERN:

It is my wish that my memoirs should be dedicated to the memory of my beloved

Sister: **REGINKA FLATTO** and to my dear **FAMILY** who perished in the

HOLOCAUST in the last months of 1944 and 1945 almost at the end of this terrible

War.

The name to be used should be: **Ann Hanka Flatto**

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1939



LODZ

Dear Reader: Before I even start to tell this story, I would like to explain why the subject that I am going to write about is so important to me. I know that o one enjoys reading about World War Two, or the Holocaust. There is no doubt in my mind, that most of us would rather read about happy events, about love, comedies, biographies of famous people. However, in view of the present situation, when so many people are trying to deny that the Holocaust ever took place, that it is only a Jewish fabrication, a Jewish propaganda, I feel that as a survivor it is my obligation to give testimony to what happened to me, to my family and to all of the Jews in Europe. Can you imagine that if these people have the audacity to deny this terrible occurrence while we are still alive, what will happen when we will be gone? What will happen in fifty, a hundred or two hundred years from now? Because of their guilt and shame they are trying to rewrite history at our expense. Shame on them! We were there! These atrocities were perpetrated on us and our families and all the Jews. It is truly a miracle that any of us survived these atrocities, this hell. I think that the only reason we were left alive is so that we will tell the truth of what really happened to us and all the Jewish people in this human inferno. Therefore, dear reader, it is my duty to keep on

spreading the un-fortunate truth, and I am asking you to tell it to your children and to your children's children and to generations to come until the coming of MOSHIACH (Messiah), so that another Holocaust will never again take place in this world of ours. I was born in Lodz Poland; so let me tell you a little about Lodz. I will start with what I know about the beginning of the history of Jews in the city of Lodz. In 1782 there were 190 people living in Lodz, of which only eleven were Jewish. The city at that time was a small farm town. There was no industry. There were only local laborers, like bakers, tailors etc. In 1798 the Prussian authorities tried to bring industry to this small enclave. In 1808 the population rose to 434, which included 58 Jews. Salomonowicz was the first Rabbi in Lodz. Pinchas Hiller-ha Kohen succeeded him. During the German occupation the Jews were able to buy real estate and life was not too difficult for them. So the Jews like Kohn, Poznanski, Silberstein, Jarocinski, Landau, Prussak and Kestenberg together with the gentile Germans like Geyer, Heinzl, Scheibler and many others were the builders of first textile center in Lodz. In 1825 the Jewish population of Lodz grew to 450, while the town had over 4300 people. However, when the Russian authorities took over the city, they were less favorable to the Jews. They issued all sorts of decrees, which made life very difficult for the Jewish people. The next Rabbi in Lodz was Rabbi Jerosolimski, and then was Rabbi Mendel Wolf. When

Rabbi Nomberg from Kock became the Lodzer Rabbi there were already 450 Jews living in Lodz, and that was in 1831. In 1850 the population of Lodz rose to 24,650, where as the Jewish population was only 2900. After the death of Rabbi Nomberg, Rabbi Moshe Lipszyc of Kock took his place. The Jews followed the German population, and got involved in the textile industry, which eventually became famous all over Europe. Just like the Germans they too opened textile factories, spinning factories and in a very short time reached great accomplishments in this field, and became very affluent in this new industrial city. The rich Jews of Lodz started to copy the European life style, they built luxury palaces and lived very high. Beginning with 1823, there were big changes in Lodz. There was an influx of foreigners who were brought to Lodz to teach and start the textile industry. And that was the beginning of the rapid grows of the city. Rabbi Elias Chaim Majzel became chief Rabbi of Lodz and retained the post till 1912. He was known for his tremendous feeling for the poor. Rabbi Majzel was the founder of the first Talmud Torah for poor children. He was beloved by all and saw a to it that there was peace between the secular Jews and the Orthodox Jews, as well as with the Chasidim. He was a great asset to the Jewish people. The next Rabbi who replaced him surely had "Big Shoes to fill". In 1891 the Jewish community donated money to buy land on Marysin for a new Jewish cemetery. This cemetery was near the Berzezinska

Road. They even moved some graves from the old cemetery to the new one. In 1894 there was an epidemic of cholera in Lodz, and these death people were buried in a new special section in the new cemetery.

The Jewish population mushroomed very quickly. The economic life as a whole dependent very much on it's Jewish and German citizens. Because of these citizens Lodz became very successful large textile center in Poland, in fact they called Lodz the second Manchester.

The Polish church was very much against the Jewish religion, and Judaism in general, it was well known, that anti-Semitism is a Christian illness. They accused all the Jews of killing Christ, and the local priest in the village or the cardinals in the big cities, all were well informed of "In capita et in membris". They all preached hatred, and blamed the Jews for Christ's death.

Rabbi Eliezer Trejstman a Gerer Chasid who was the Rabbi of Radom became the chief Rabbi of Lodz, and his reign lasted till 1920. After Rabbi Treistman died Lodz never had another chief Rabbi. The Jews and the Germans contributed a lot to the cultural growth of Lodz. It is almost impossible to describe how fast the Jews

established various social institutions. Lodz had many hospitals, old age homes, Bikur Cholim, Linas Ha-Zedek, libraries, etc, etc. Lodz had the philharmonic orchestra, which included many famous Jewish violinists, pianists and other musicians. The city also boasted many world-renowned Jewish artists, authors, and doctors. Lodz had many Yeshivot, many primary and private gymnazia, as well as Liceums, which was a higher level than high school. There were many social, cultural and Zionist clubs.

Lodz contained eleven synagogues, and many, many houses of worship of various religious denominations. There were mikvoth, (ritual baths) and all types of religious study houses. There were Jewish theaters, movie houses, and every possible type of philanthropic organization thinkable to help fellow Jews, as well as the rest of the population at large.

Already in 1839, the Jews of Lodz were the owners of big factories and businesses. Among these families were the following: The Landaus, Bronowskis, Zajdemans, Rosenblatts and Poznanskis, as well as many others. The most famous doctors, who accomplished a lot in the field of Tuberculosis, were Doctor Maksymilian Kon and Dr. Severyn Sterling. The political parties in Lodz were very well organized.

There was the Socialist party, the Bund and many, different Zionist organizations. The sport clubs like Ha-Cohan and Macabi, were famous all over Poland. There was a Linas Cholim, Linas

Hatzedek, Bikur Cholim, Ezras Cholim Tomchei-Orchim, Hachnosos Kalah and many others. There were many Jewish newspapers, both in Yiddish as well as many in the Polish language. At the end of 1914, the Germans occupied the city of Lodz, and things were pretty quiet and normal for the Jews during the German occupation. After World War One, the Jews enjoyed good times. They were active in government and life was pretty smooth on it's way to normality, having survived World War I. Marshall Jozef Pilsudski, who ruled Poland after World War I, was very kind and generous to the Jews. In fact, when he died, the Agudath-Yisrael gave permission for the Jewish children of Poland, to wear black armbands for one month, to symbolize their sadness at having lost a friend of the Jews.

It is almost impossible to name all the famous people who contributed so much to Lodz. Lodz gave the world famous musicians like Arthur Rubinstein, composer Aleksander Tansman and Pawel Klecki. Lodz gave the world famous artists such as Jankel Adler, Arthur Szyk, Maurycy Trembacz, famous poets such as Julian Tuwim. All of these great men were Jewish, and they played a very important part in the Polish culture. All this is just a short description of what part our Lodzer Jews played in the growth of the city, from the beginning to the unfortunate end of the Holocaust. So now I will take you on a short excursion to visit the city where I was born and that is Lodz, Poland: The main

street, Piotrkowska, ran from one end of the city to the other end. It housed the most elegant stores, beginning on Platz Wolnosci (The Freedom Square) all the way to Gorny Rynek (The High Market). These stores were famous for expensive jewelry, furs coats, suits, dresses, textiles and most modern appliances. Everything was available for the buying, as long as you had the money with which to pay. On the other side of Platz Wolnosci was Nowomiejska Street, (The New City Street), which after many blocks was called Zgierska Street, because it led into another neighborhood, called Zgierz, which was a suburb of Lodz. The next stop was Platz Wolnosci, which was a complete circle. Along this circle was the City Hall and another city building. From there one could continue to Nowomiejska Street, one of the busiest textile centers in the city of Lodz. Located here were the biggest wholesale and retail textile stores. There were wool stores, hosiery stores, shoe stores, fancy fur stores, clothing stores, one after another. One could choose whatever one wanted. Anything you could dream of to purchase was available there, all one needed was money. As you continued down the Nowomiejska Street, you found yourself on Zgierska, the center of the hardware business, building equipment, and house ware. Here and there you could find grocery or dairy stores, and some restaurants. There were many other business sections in town, however, these were Lodz's biggest and busiest. Jews or Germans owned most of these stores.

Lodz was known all over Europe as the Second Manchester. The city was only 150 years old and was mainly populated by Jews, Germans and Poles, each represented one third of the almost 770,000 inhabitants by 1939. The Jews mainly lived in the city, where as Poles, mainly lived on the outskirts of the city. There were poor sections and rich sections in Lodz just like in any other city. The rich Poles and the intelligence lived among the Jews. The majority of the very rich in Lodz were mostly German gentiles, and Jews. There were very few wealthy Poles in Lodz. The factories employed mainly Poles and poor Jews. The owners of these huge factories were the well-known Jews like the Poznanskies, Hertz, Silversteins, Cohns, Eisners, Picks and Pikelnys. It must be noted that there were huge factories that belonged to Germans like Sheibler, Grohman, Geyer and many others. Most of the Jews were orthodox Jews, and they did not forget their heritage. They prospered in their businesses, enjoyed their families and friends, and for a short period of time, seemed to be blessed with everything that G-d can provide. Lodz was known as the second orthodox enclave in Poland. There were many yeshivoth, chaders, and many religious private schools. There were many Hebrew day schools, many private progressive schools, Bund schools and many others. There were many private Gymnaziums, like the Hebrew Gymnazium which was part of the University of Jerusalem. There was a huge number of other private gymnaziums, which were owned by

private Jews. In addition to these schools, there were State Gymnasiums, as well as Jewish state public schools. The Agudath Israel was very active in Lodz and they were very organized. There were many sects of Chasidim, but the two major ones were the Alexandere and Gere. These Chasidim lived a different life than the rest of the people. Their lives almost always began with "Maaser"- sharing their wealth with the less fortunate fellow Jews, and when they fulfilled that, only then, did they take care of their own personal luxuries. Most of these chasidim were very rich and could have afforded to live in palaces just like the Poznanskies and others, however, they did not. Most lived in apartment houses. They had large apartments, which differed from the other rich assimilated Jews, who lived in mansions. In addition to the Chasidim, there were also Mizrachi Jews, who were Zionist Jews who lived a more modern orthodox Jewish life. These Jews also lived in Lodz and shared the wealth or poverty of this famous city. The balance of the Lodzer Jews was the Bund people the communists the leftists like members of Gordonia, Shomer Ha Zair and others. Lodz had a variety of many different believers, non-believers, Zionists communists, just like New York, again all on a smaller scale. The Bund, which was in charge of the Jewish Socialist party, was very powerful in Lodz. They even had their own school. Every party tried hard to push their projects for their needs, and did this through the large Jewish publication,

which were mainly published in Yiddish and some in Polish. There was a lot of culture in Lodz, and anybody who was interested in it could indulge in the many schools and lectures, as well as sports which the Jewish community was well known for. The Jews in general got along with each other, regardless of their denominations, and there was a certain closeness, that unfortunately, Jews do not experience today. There were class divisions, which were common all over Europe, not only among the Jews but also among the gentiles. And now I would like to tell you about myself. I was born in Lodz Poland to the two most wonderful people, for which I am eternally grateful to G-d, every day of my life. For if I were to have chosen parents on my own, I could have never found more perfect parents as I was fortunate to have. My mother was the daughter of a very pious Jew, a Gerer Chasid, from a generation of big scholars, famous Gerer Chasidim in Lodz. My father was also a Gerer Chasid, who came from a well-known family in Lodz. He himself was a very famous well-known scholar, not only in Lodz but in all of Poland. My father's family was well known, as they were very learned aristocrats whose members were either scholars or well known doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers and teachers. Many of my father's family members are documented in the books about Lodz. Both families were well off, and that was why my father was able to afford to spend most of his time to study, which he did for many years. He never gave up studying Torah, even

when his family was and he needed to spend time with them. He always found time to study. My father got up at the crack of dawn, each day, to study a page of Gemara. He did this until it was time to go to Shul for morning prayers. When he returned from Shul, he ate his small breakfast and went to the business. He always left our house with his small safer under his arm, which he never put aside, so that he could study and learn whenever he had a free moment. When he returned from the business, there was always something to do for somebody else. For instance the poor person who needed to marry off a daughter, or a sick person that needed a place to convalesce. There a person that needed a loan, or just a friend that needed someone to talk to help. And always, there were men, both young and old, that came to our home to listen to my father's words of wisdom about the Torah. My mother was just as involved as my father. She was always busy with her different charities. There was Hachnoses Kallah, and Tomchei Orchim. There were the individual poor people that needed help, and always the sick to visit and care for. She was always there for those in need and nobody really knew how many mitzvos (good deeds) she was involved in during her very short young life. When the German Jews arrived in Lodz from Zbaszyn, she was busy with them day and night. Nothing was too difficult for her. Even during the war years in the ghetto, she was always busy helping people with whatever she could. I had two brothers and a sister. In those days

this was considered a big family for families living in the city and most of my schoolmates came from small families, with one or two children. There were only three girls in my class, that came from large families and they came from very poor families. We lived in the gentile neighborhood; on Strzelcow Kaniowskich, which in reality had a much longer name for it, was 28-go Pulku Strzelcow Kaniowskich number 15. Everybody knew this street as Louisa as I guess it was a leftover from the early German occupation of Lodz and it was much easier to remember. Louisa was only one block away from Platz Halera, which was the last stop on the trolley car. Platz Halera was the place was the army did their exercises, their daily drillings in Lodz. This was a very huge square, which went through the length and width of many of the adjacent streets. Along this square were army buildings, which served as lodgings for the soldiers. Platz Halera, which we could see from our kitchen window, served also as an airport, for the few planes that landed there, which did not happen very often. Adjacent to our building was a big garden that went from Louisa all the way to Leszno street. Towards the end of this garden was a big hill. In the winter we would use our sleds and sleigh down the hill and we always had a real great time. In the summer we used this hill for other games. The place was safe and protected on all sides by very tall fences. Nobody bothered us. It was not necessary to have any baby- sitters as there was no crime in this

area. The children in the building were Jewish and Gentile and we got along very well. The gentiles that lived in our building were mostly civil servant employees and were a very nice element of people. So naturally there were nice children to play with. There were no slums in this neighborhood and it was a very nice place to grow up. Across the street was an ice skating rink and we made good use of it. We were very upset when our landlord took down the hill and changed the whole place into a fruit orchard. We were allowed in this garden as long as we did not do any damage. It was a nice place in which to roam, we loved to watch the trees blossom and bear fruits. There were apple trees, pear trees, plum trees, and cherry trees of different kinds. We always had enough children to play with. There were no kindergartens in the vicinity, however, there was a small, well known, Jewish Public School.

There were not too many shuls in the neighborhood, just enough for the amount of Jews that live there. I can still recall the shul my mother davened in (prayed in). This was on Legionow, or as they used to call it Zielona Street, just around the corner from Louisa Street. The shul was inside the court of an apartment house. The men prayed on the ground floor and the women, were one flight up right above them. There was an opening in the floor for the women to hear the services. My father used to go to the shul further up on Louisa, which was an shteibel just for men. The Poles, who

were known to be anti-Semites, were very nice to us. They maintained friendly relations with us and we lived side by side, in peace. We were never afraid. My parents came and went freely, at any time of day and night, and nobody bothered them. Because there was no kindergarten in the neighborhood, my mother was able to get me into the neighborhood public school, which was not very easy. My mother promised to become active in this school, which she did, and, as always, my mother kept her promise to the very end. The school was known as the Moskiewicz School, and if I remember well, it was Public School number 138. People said that Mrs. Moskiewicz was a personal friend to Marshal Josef Pilsudski, and because of that she had a lot of pull in the Board of Education as well as the Socialist Party. She was a very energetic and smart lady and she ran the school with an iron fist. She taught math to the upper grades, and if you were lucky enough to be in her class, you were sure to truly learn math. Her math lectures were very interesting.

I loved this neighborhood as it was away from the center of the city, away from the hustle and bustle. Some of the children we played with came from German families, and we all played together, until Hitler came to power and poisoned them all. Suddenly the German children stopped playing with us and we could not understand why. When we got older our parents told us the reason,

and we were told to stay away from them, even though our friendship had lasted many years. Shortly after that we met with a small incident that changed our lives. During the burning of the chometz on Erev Pesach, the Gentile boys from the adjacent building kept on throwing stones, so that they would put out the fire. My brother, Lajser got mad, and because he had no fears, because he always stood up to those who challenged him, he went after them, and beat them up which they rightly deserved. The Poles did not like that, and they threatened to kill my brother. For the first time, my parents realized that they now had to worry about our future in this peaceful neighborhood. This incident opened my eyes, and although I was a young girl, I became aware for the first time in my life, that I was different and that for some reason, that I did not and still do not understand, the Poles hated us. After this incident nobody did anything to my brother nor my family, however, our feelings were not the same anymore.

My parents began to look around for a new place for use. It took almost a year, but when the situation presented itself, we moved to the center of the city, where the majority of the middle class Jews lived. Gdanska 15 was practically a brand new building and everything in our apartment was modern. In front of the building was a huge garden with very tall acacia trees and lots of grass, and as you walked toward the building on this long pavement, there

was another small garden. This garden was lined by a square of lilac trees, which was beautiful in early spring and summer. There were benches inside the garden and outside. The windows of our apartment faced the third court, which we used for playing. There were lockers for every tenant of this building. The neighbors were very nice, and there were quite a number of children my age, which made it even nicer. My mother got busy decorating our new apartment, and it did not take long for us to get used to this change.

I continued going to my old public school, which was pretty far. Very often I would take the trolley, and when the weather was nice and warm, I would walk to school. I loved my new home, and new friends, and slowly forgot our old house on Louisa. My brother Lajser became an ardent Zionist. He first joined the Shomer Ha-Dati, and then the Bnei-Akiba. The Bnei-Akiba became his life together with his friends Noah and Jossi. When Hitler's influence was spreading in Lodz, as it was all over Europe, my father told my mother, that he no longer wished to have a gentile sleep-in maids, and that it was time to hire a Jewish maid. And My mother hired Ida Bulwa, who was with us for six years. My parents like a member of the family rather than a maid treated Ida. In fact she wanted it to be known that she was a distant cousin to us, and that's what we told everybody. Ida came from a nice Jewish orthodox family. Her father was a tailor, in a small town in

Poland by the name of Staszow. Her parents were poor and could not support all of their many children, so when the children got older, they moved to big cities, and became maids. They had no trade nor profession, and they possessed very little education, so there was nothing else for them to choose. We loved Ida and she loved us.

Both my parents were the perfect parents to have children, and I hope that due to them, my children and grandchildren have inherited their wonderful genes as well as their MIDOS, and their wisdom. To be a perfect parent is a great gift from G-d, which not many people have. My father was a very gentle soul. He never hurt anybody, and he loved every Jew, rich, poor, religious, not religious. He loved people and always found excuses for people's behavior. He never condemned any anyone. From his children, however, he expected a lot, but he did so in a most unique, loving way. My mother had a heart of gold. She was always giving and helping wherever she was needed and at any time of day and night. However, she was the disciplinarian in the family and made sure that each of her four children acted properly and did what was expected of us. Our house was full of Torah and learning. It was not just books, but it was how my parents practiced the Mitzvos the way they were ordered to by G-d. There were no two codes of laws; there was only one way and that was the right way. We

children were always preached to, how not to insult anybody, how to be kind to people, how to help people, how to follow the ethics and morals of our Torah. And today I see, how different we were from others and that's all because of the teachings of my wonderful parents.

I can still remember, how my father was teaching my brother Lajser for his Bar Mitzvah, and of course, I remember the actual Bar Mitzvah, which was like a wedding. After all, Lajser was the first grandchild to become a Bar Mitzvah. All the furniture was moved around so that there should be enough room for the guests. Mother hired two waiters. All the food had to be Pesachdik (Kosher for Passover), because his Bar-Mitzvah was on Shabbot-Ha-Gadol, immediately before Pesach. My sister and I were sick with the measles, she being laid up in the kitchen in Ida's bed, and I suddenly came down with this illness too. I did not tell anybody. I just went to my parent's bedroom and laid myself down under all the coats. This way I did not spoil this great Simcha for anybody. Lajser did not follow in my father's footsteps. He attended yeshiva, and was religious, however he was not a Chasid. He eventually became a Zionist and he believed in the dream of living in Israel very much. Because of that he had many disputes with my father, who tried to win him over, but it did not work. My father would have wanted Lajser to be a real yeshiva boy; to sit and

learn Torah day and night, and to be a member of Agudath Israel and not a Mizrachi boy. My brother was a very dedicated Orthodox boy. He did not miss any of the prescribed prayers that a Jew is obligated to. He used to get up early in the morning to have Shiur with my father, which was more beneficial than a lesson from any other teacher, but that was not what my father had in mind for him. At this time, Lajser was working as a salesman in a textile firm, where he was very well liked and regarded. Soon after, when Lajser was seventeen years old, he left on Hachshara to a Bnei Akiba kibbutz in Slawkow Poland, in order to prepare him for his "real" aliya, which was known as aliya alef. My brother Lajser was a very honest and moral person. He followed my father's teachings all his life. When Lutek Stern returned from Israel, where he was studying at the University of Yerushalaim, to visit his family in Lodz, her promised my father that he would get an affidavit for my brother to go to Israel. Unfortunately, this never materialized after almost a year in the Kibbutz, my brother came home and he started to look for other ways to get to Israel, which was then known as Palestine. He was even willing to try aliya bet, to which my father did not want to agree, as the group on aliya bet would have to be smuggled into Israel. Lajser got his old job back, as a textile salesman and he worked there until the war broke out. His dream of reaching the Land of Israel, never came true. Next in line was I, and what is there to write about me before the war. I

was a young girl and I went to school, was busy with my homework, busy with my friends, and with Bnei-Akiba. My life was just like any other young girl all over the world, free of any worries. After me was my brother Chaim, a sweet little boy, who was good hearted, always ready to help, as much as a little boy his age can be of help. And then came my sister Reginka about whom I have written much. She was our family's baby, spoiled, but if not for her I do not know what would have happened to us in the Lodzer ghetto. She saved our lives. The summers we always spent in the country as we used to go away for ten weeks. Ida, our maid, went with us and we had a great time. When we used to come back to the city, we would really appreciate our apartment. The villas in the country did not have running water nor did they have bathrooms, and we had to use the outhouses, and that was terrible for us. By 1938, they already started building summer places with all the same conveniences, which we had at home, and that made life easier for all of us. So this is just a general description of how we lived in Lodz from the beginning till 1939, when our life took a complete turn around. Who would or could imagine what the future had in store for us. From a quiet tranquil life to a life of hell. Try to combine Lodz with Lodz so that it is a continuation of all about life in Lodz till 1944 and the file of Ghetto Lodz.

HATRED

The Nazis seemed to have a lot in common with the English people, because in 1290 to 1656 England was Juden-Rein. England expelled all the Jews from England, they called them the accursed group of users.

The Jews in Germany were less than one percent of the German population, and never the less there was still a lot of anti-Semitism. Historically the Jews were always the targets of hatred wherever there was trouble in the land.

Even the German Jewish friends agreed with their greatest enemies that the Jews were “Morally Corrupt” and that the Jews were not fit to be citizen of Germany. Therefore the Jews in Germany were put on probation, they were waiting for the Jews to renounce their Jewishness completely. Even the churches in Germany preached against the Jews just like the churches did in Poland.

However, some of the Jewish gentile friends believed that the Jews could be educated, reformed, regenerated and become moral human beings.

The pressure was so great in the middle part of the 19th century to renounce Judaism that many Jews converted to Christianity. The Germans were very much against Jewish emancipation and their rights.

The Jews were always considered foreigners; the Christians identified the Jews with the devil. So then came the new idea, instead of the Jews converting to Christianity they had a new solution, to expel them completely, and even annihilate them. They believed that the elimination of the minority would bring an end to all their problems.

So Hitler and his SS were the most brutal Nazis. People must be motivated to kill others, which they did for many years. Already in 1930 they stripped the Jews of their citizenship and put them in concentration camps. They claimed that the Jews caused all the trouble for the host nation, and that they harmed Germany.

Nobody took up the Jewish cause. But when the Nazis restricted the Catholics to their religious practices and asked them to remove the crucifixes from schools in Bavaria this led to a big protest, which forced the government to rescind their order.

There were many strikes between the years of 1936-1937, but these were mainly strikes about regime policies against the working people. Then there were strikes against "Euthanasia".

So this is how it all began and how it led to the Greatest Holocaust in Jewish history.

Ben Hecht said: " Being assured by the Germans that they have reformed the world has dropped the whole subject of what made Hans & Fritz commit the greatest mass horror in the pages of history. The only practical way yet discovered by the world for curing its ills to forget about them and the hope for the best. I think otherwise about the Germans. they have not reformed, they are resting".

In 1949 the Lower House in the Bavarian Parliament first granted the Jews full equality, which was a little too late, for they have already killed six million Jews.

SEPTEMBER 1939

After hearing the terrible news on the radio, that the air raids were starting, my family glued strips of paper to all the windows, so that the windows would not splinter, should the air raids hit our house. Then my mother and the housekeeper went to the neighborhood stores to buy groceries; in the event that we would not be able to go out of our homes, there would be enough food for us to eat.

Suddenly, the sirens were announcing an air raid. All the people in our building left their apartments, and were congregating in the lobby which was supposed to be like a bunker against the bombs. We lived on the ground floor, so our apartment became public property. When people needed a drink or were hungry, our apartment was the likely place to go to.

This brought people together and we became like one big family, in our anxiety about the bombs. The men discussed politics, and voiced their fears of how to protect their children in the event that they were to be taken to the army. The women also worried about how to protect their children with the future so unknown. We

the children, did not understand the actual meaning of war. We were very young and could not conceive the danger and evil of war. None of us could imagine the suffering that was waiting for us. We could not leave the building, nor could anybody be seen in the street, so we too congregated in some of the safe places. We talked about school, about books, but none of us was brave enough to speak about the future. We were used to a calm wobbles life, and we liked it that way.

On September 4th of was it 5th just before the Germans were about to enter Lodz, my father and I went to Tante Sara who lived around the corner from us. My father made a proposition to Tante Sara, he told her to go to the bank and take all the dollars and English pounds. And this way we would be able to buy our way out of Poland. He told her that when the war will be over, we will return this money to the bank and this way we would save our lives. Tante Sara went to ask her sister and brother in-law who lived in the same building, what they thought about this. When she came back she said that Jozio's family was against this plan. My father and I went to his other sister to tell her of his project, as well as to his uncle and aunt the Zichers. Unfortunately auntie Sara did not listen to my father who as you all know now was a hundred procent right.

In the beginning of the war dollars and pounds were the most important kind of money that could buy everything. From what I know today, many people bought their freedom this way.

Lodz did not suffer much from bombings. Occasionally we would see and hear some Messerschmidts flying over our apartment buildings, but there were few damages because of it. And that is how we lived until the Germans came to Lodz.

This picture I will never forget. My brother and I walked over to the Platz Wolnosci, for this was the place where the Poles built a very big statue to their famous leader and freedom fighter Tadeusz Kosciuszko. The Germans came from four corners of the city of Lodz. They did not come by foot, but rather they were all motorized, on cars, motorcycles tanks and every possible thing that had wheels. They looked victorious already, and the German population of Lodz was there to greet them with their Heil Hitler of course. Actually, a third of the population of the city of Lodz was German, and they had collaborated with the Nazis for many years already.

Once the German occupied Lodz we were forbidden to leave our homes after 5:00 PM, and every day there were new orders for the Jews.

When the Germans were approaching Lodz, many Jewish people left the city, and with whatever they could salvage on their backs, they ran to save their lives, and the lives of their children. It was a real exodus. And while the Jews were running away from Lodz, the German airplanes were shooting and practically flying over their heads, and torturing them sadistically.

Many people gave up their plight and returned to Lodz, for the Nazis did not let them continue their exodus.

There was a German family in our building by the name of Cohen. Mr. Cohen was Jewish, while his wife and children were Gentiles. Mrs. Cohen told everybody not to worry, and advised everybody not to run away to Warsaw, or other cities. So, we at Gdanska 15, stayed put, and listened to the advice of Mrs. Cohen.

We learned to do the best with what was available to us. We visited each other and tried to spend time together. The schools were closed, and because of that, we had a lot of free time. Our maid stayed with us, so I was not needed to help with the household.

In the meantime the Jewish holidays came around. Since the Nazis forbade the use of the Synagogues. While our parents and brothers congregated in one of the apartments to conduct the Rosh-Hashana Service, we the girls were assigned to be the watchmen. Our job was to alert our families so that they could quickly disperse, should we see any Germans enter the premises.

We were quite lucky, for our apartment building was set back, unlike the rest of the apartment buildings in Lodz. There was a huge garden in the front, and one had to follow a very long sidewalk until you reached the main apartment house.

The Jewish Holidays in 1939 were very sad. Everybody was very nervous and full of worries about the future. Our prayers were like one very long cry to G-d asking for help. Never before had I seen my parents so upset and worried.

Soon after the Germans entered Lodz they dynamited the statue of Tadeusz Kosciuszko which stood on Plac Wolnosci (The Freedom Square). They filmed a few Jews as those responsible for destroying this statue. The following day they burned all the synagogues in Lodz, they filmed it and made the Poles responsible for it. They said that the Jews burned Tadeusz Kosciuszko,

therefore the Poles burned the synagogues. Just want include a Polish poem:

Brandowiec a Ukrainian Fashist) (Szaulis a Lituanian Fashist)

"Brandowiec dal mu w gebe Szaulis me siedzenie spral Niemiec wybil
wzystkie zeby

Potem kule w leb mu dal. Nad smiertelnym go barlogiem Spytał ktos
ciekawski

zbyt: _Kto nawiekszym twoim wrogiem? Ow, nim skonął, charnal: -"Zyd".

Soon after the Nazis started they torturous tactics. They grabbed people off the street and took them away, forcing them to do all kinds of work, and most of the time it was just to carry stones from one place to another. This was done just to dehumanize the Jews and make them suffer. Many times these people were never seen again. It was not until years later that we finally discovered what these Jews endured by the hands of the Nazis.

There were two SS-men who were stationed with two different families in our building. One of them was a Mr. Palmer, who stayed with the Rosenblum family. Maybe this was the reason that they

did not bother our people as much as they did the others. When the Germans took over the adjacent police precinct, they came to our building looking for furniture. They came to our apartment, and we did not know what they would do to us, however, all they took was our new sofa, and kept it for a few months. Believe it or not, sometime later, they actually returned the sofa! What a surprise. This may have been because of Mr. Palmer's influence.

Time was dragging on like molasses. Life was full of bad news and we had to cue up for bread and for groceries. Every place you went there long lines for food. When finally, it was our turn to be next, the stingy Polaks would go over to the SS-men and say "Jude, Jude", and poke fun at us. Sometimes, this would be the end of our food escapade, and we returned home empty handed. We were lucky that our maid, Ida, did not look Jewish and she was able to get the bread and food for us. My sister, Reginka, had red hair and looked like a real German. She used to venture out after 5:00 PM to get us food.

It is hard to imagine that such a young girl was able to be so brave in order to bring home food for her family. Reginka, the baby in the family, became the supplier of everything for all of us. She was forced to grow up over night and she became the watchman and savior for her family.

And so, time passed slowly, and with it came the cold season, and the long nights were like an eternity. We the young people, tried to keep busy. One of the young people came up with an idea. He suggested that we should make a small ice skating rink in front of our windows, which faced the third court yard. Believe it or not we were very successful in our venture. So when it got dark we would be out there skating to our heart's content.

Time marched ahead and we kept busy until, the Germans announced that all the Jews must leave Lodz. This was November 1939. The Nazis deported many Jews from Lodz to unknown places.

The Aelteste der Juden, Chaim Rumkowski was running around and telling the Jews

of Lodz to leave the city. My fathers's friend, Rabbi Simcha Trejstman, was able

to persuade the Gestapo to hold off this order. Rumkowski was very jealous of

Rabbi Trejstman, and made his life unbearable in Lodz, and eventually Rabbi

Trejstman left Lodz with his entire family to Warsaw.

As a result of Rumkowski's warning, many Jews left Lodz, mainly to Warsaw and some, to other small towns. My parents sent most of our bedding to Warsaw, as we had plans to go there. When we were ready

to go there, the Nazis would no longer allow us to. Eventually there was an order from the Gestapo, that all Jews must move to the ghetto, which was to be located in the poorest part of the city, which was called Baluty. Nobody wanted to believe it. Nobody could conceive that this small section could accommodate over 200,000 Jews.

All these happenings changed our moods. Even the youngsters became adults over night. Many young people decided to leave Lodz, and their destination was East Russia. In fact my own brother, Lajser had tickets to go to Russia. The reason that he did not go, was that my father asked him to promise that he would put on tefilin every day, even if he did not pray. My brother was too honest, and told my father that he could not be certain that he could keep this promise. Had my father known what was in store for all of us, he would never had asked this of Lajser. Needless to say, Lajser never left Lodz and his family.

This move to the ghetto caused real havoc. People did not know what to do.

In October of this same year, my father's brother and his family came to live with us. They were bombed out in the city of Uniejow,

where unfortunately, their son-in-law, Leventhal, had been shot by the Nazis a few weeks earlier. Tante Sara and my brother Lajser brought him to Lodz to the Radogoszcz hospital, where he died a few days later at the age of 24.

The winter of this year was fierce, just as bitter as our lives. People tried to salvage whatever they could, and they dragged their belongings on their backs to the ghetto. We were not so lucky, all we could save was my father's sforim, his library and that was all. We dragged these things on a sleigh, while the streets were covered with snow and sleet. We were not permitted to return to our apartment to retrieve other necessities. My father was very grateful to us that we saved his sforim, as they were very precious to him. He did not want for any material things. These were his diamonds, his treasures, and who knows where they are today.

Every time our janitor Gregor, would see us carry a package he would come and check, to make sure that we were not taking anything from our house. He, who had been our friend, was now anxious to take our belongings for himself.

There was terrible confusion. How were we going to live in one room, no toilet, no running water, all the way on the top floor. My parents were very concerned about this. I on the other hand, as a young,

inexperienced girl, fantasized that I would live as a poor person, and get to experience how the poor lived. Never in a million years could I imagine that what was waiting for us in the ghetto and Auschwitz, as well as other concentration camps. Never, in a million years, could have known that the life we would live would far surpass the lives of the poor, in its harshness, its cruelty and its total devastation. Because of our protekcja, we got a room in my grandfather's building, and we were extremely happy that at least we would have a roof over our heads. Our room was on the third floor, the last door in a long, dingy, dark corridor. The room had two windows, and three walls that were exposed. Only one wall was attached to the adjacent apartment. There were two wooden beds, a sofa, and a small table and chairs in the center. The kitchen was divided by a wardrobe, and a kitchen cabinet. There was a bin to store the coal, a shelf for the two pails of water, a cabinet for pots and pans, a small stove, and a small work table. There was hardly any space to move around, as this small area had to house the six of us. The floors were made of simple wooden boards, and the so called kitchen had a narrow aisle, just large enough to put up a collapsible bed. We inherited this room from the Jews who were deported to the unknown, otherwise we would have had nothing. The place was crowded with us six people. Imagine, that for the first two weeks in the ghetto, there were between 15-20 people sleeping in this room. There were people

sleeping on the floor, on the table, under the table, wherever one could find a spot. These people had not been assigned a room of their own and they asked my parents to find space for them. My parents, in their ultimate kindness, allowed them to share our one room so that they would not have to freeze on the street, or die in the hallways. It was a true miracle that the walls allowed all of us to endure in this small space. I still do not know how we did this. Eventually, all these people were assigned to a room some place. We settled in this room. We had practically no bedding, and the frost would not stop.

It was the most bitter winter I can remember. The water used to freeze in our pails. We did not have any running water, nor toilets in this building. This was very hard for us to get used to. I soon realized that my dreams of living in one room like other poor people was far from good. It was a torture to use a pail at night for a toilet, and to live with the smell in this one room. This was my first experience with poverty and soon I was to experience true hunger. Then came the experience of sickness and epidemics. It was all to hit me at once and my dreams were shattered as horrible reality hit me at this early stage of life.

THIS IS THE STORY OF MY COUSIN HANKA FLATTO FROM KALISH-POLAND

This goes back to October 1939, when we received the terrible news through the Red Cross that the husband of my cousin Gitel was shot by the Gestapo. My cousin Gitel was married a short time before the war broke out, to the son of the chief Rabbi of the city of Uniejow. Her married name was Leventahl, they lived in Kalish near her parents. When the war broke out, they all went to live in Uniejow, which was a much smaller town than Kalish. Unfortunately the house they lived in was bombed in the beginning of the war, and the fire ruined everything they possessed. They were left with nothing, and all that would have been O.K. if not for what happened later.

As usual the Nazis needed some excitement, and of course how do you do that? How do you scare the population? You use a scapegoat, and who is the scapegoat if not the Jews. So they spread rumors that a German soldier was killed, and of course they were going to take revenge for it. They gathered all the young men of this town, and they picked the tallest and the most handsome Jews and shot at them at random. My cousin Gitel's husband was one of them.

They shot him, he was deadly wounded and they left him there without any help, without any care. When the family found this out, they sent Hanka which was the sister-in law to take care of him, because his wife was devastated and could not face this tragedy.

As told to me by Hanka, her brother in law was put into this room that was designated or I should rather say that the floor was designated for those wounded that managed to still be alive.

As I already mentioned it was Hanka's turn to take care of her wounded brother in law. So In this very small room were the rest of the wounded men, whom the Germans shot was to be the so-called "hospital".

My cousin had a hole near his heart, and under normal diagnosis the doctor said afterwards that in such a case people die on the spot. However, he was young and very strong, so by sheer miracle he lasted a few weeks.

Hanka was his nurse; there were no medical supplies. I remember that she told me that she tore a man's shirt so she could stop his blood from running. She was with him all day and all night, and as usual the nights were worse than the days. Some of the wounded people lost their minds. As a result of their high fever they hallucinated, and she actually had to battle with them, otherwise there would be bedlam.

When my cousin was telling me about this experience, she did not understand how she could keep her sanity, among all these sick people with all their problems.

In the mean time we got word in Lodz of what has happened to our cousin in Uniejow, and my uncle begged that we should send an ambulance in order to bring him to the hospital in Lodz.

My aunt Sara who knew a lot of important people in Lodz as well as my father worked day and night to get this ambulance. You must realize that we were dealing with the early part of the war, and the government confiscated most of the ambulances. After a lot of dealings and money we finally got the Jewish Morgen David which was called in Lodz Linas Zedek.

My brother Lajzer was elected to go with the ambulance to Uniejow and they brought him to Lodz to the Radogoszcz hospital. Soon after my uncle Shmiel and his family arrived in Lodz and came to stay with us, for they had no other place to go to. So we gave them my parent's bedroom and we managed to live this way.

One day my cousin Hanka asked me to take her to the hospital in Radogoszcz, she was a stranger in our city; she has never been to Lodz before. So I was elected to go with her and show her the way. This happened such a long time ago that many of the important details are left out, however, I will never forget the experience I had when I came to this hospital. Wounded soldiers or civilians occupied every bed; there was no empty bed. We had a hard time finding our cousin. Wherever I looked I saw man with bandaged faces and bandages all over their bodies. They were sighing, they were in terrible pain, and because many years later I too was wounded and found myself in the hospital so I know from my own experience how they must have suffered.

At last we found my cousin, he was happy to see us, he could hardly talk, his face was as white as chalk. The loss of blood has put a terrible strain on his health. His heart was damaged, but we all hoped that he would make it.

I was very young in-experienced and have never seen anybody who was wounded before. My cousin and I believed that because he was so young that he would survive.

I was never in contact with death, and could not conceive that in spite of all the medical help and his effort, his days were already counted. It seemed to me that the hospital would surely cure him. When we left the hospital I could not forget this picture of war, this was my first encounter with the terrible price we Jews had to pay for being Jewish. My cousin died a few days after we visited him.

Poor Gitel sat Shivah in our house. What a terrible experience to be married just a few months and already loose a husband, only because the Nazis felt like having fun.

Little did we know then what the future was hiding for us? While Gitel was sitting Shivah Hanka broke down, it was too much for a young girl to bear. Gitel

was the soft one in the family and again Hanka was elected to take care of her family.

I am sure that if I would have written about it thirty nine years ago, nobody would be able to read about this terrible experience, after such a long time things begin to fade away. We try not to think too much about all these bestial Nazis, and what they did to us. We all know that it is our obligation to leave the truth to the generations to come, so that they should know what happened. All our Holocaust experiences still hurt, and this wound will never heal. Who would believe that this educated Germany will change into cannibals. I think that animals are by far superior to the Nazis; an animal has some feelings, while they had none. What the Nazis had was brutality bestiality and venom.

GRANDMA 1939

I do not remember the exact date when my beloved grandmother died, but it could have not been more than two months after the Germans occupied Lodz. It seems, that somebody told the Gestapo that my grandparents were hiding ammunition in their house. Naturally this was just an excuse.

As told by my grandfather to my mother:

"Early in the morning there was a loud knocking at the door, then my grandfather asked who it is, he was told that it was the Gestapo." He quickly hid some of his money and other valuables fir he realized, that they would confiscate whatever they would find in the house.

The Gestapo kept on knocking at the door with their guns and bayonets, when grandfather opened the door, they beat him up, and wanted to know, why he did not open the door at once. Grandpa told them that he had to get dressed, that he was still in bed, but of course they would not accept his excuse, and kept on beating him merciless.

Grandma saw how they kept on beating her husband for no reason at all. She fainted, nobody paid any attention to her. The Nazis were not in the least interested to help my poor grandmother. It seems that out of fear she had a heart attack, the Gestapo knew very well what was taken place, but ignored her completely and they went on their expedition of find so called "ammunition" which they never found, for there never was any. So instead they took whatever they could, just to fill their pockets, and to make this "old couple" (both grandpa and grandma were just about sixty years old) suffer.

After the Gestapo left, my grandfather got hold of his youngest son, the housekeeper, and all of them tried to revive grandma Meriam. They called the Jewish Hatzola which was called Lenas Zedek, but unfortunately, nothing helped. Our beloved grandma was death, and poor grandfather, had no choice but to go and make funeral arrangements. He called his children and had to tell them, about their terrible loss, this was a shock to all of us. Our grandmother was the most perfect grandmother, she was caring, loving, giving, and very interested in the welfare of her family, and everybody she came in contact with. How do you explain to little children, that your grandmother died so suddenly. Just because the Germans accused them of harboring ammunition, these were their gimmicks to kill Jews. This was unheard of we were not

used yet, to the atrocities that were waiting for us in the future.

So my uncle Abram and grandfather went to the Jewish Committee to make funeral arrangements. The Jewish Committee, knew that grandfather was a very rich man, and they asked astronomical amount of money to burry my grandmother. Grandfather tried to explain to them, that this is war time and that he could not afford to give them so much money, he has many children and grandchildren to support, would they please consider a little less, but they refused. So grandfather called my father to the rescue, and my father went with him again to settle this matter. It seems that my father was very successful, for they listened to my father's argument and they settled for a lesser amount.

Granfather was determined to have my grandmother's funeral as soon as possible, for it is a big honor in the Jewish religion to burry a person within hours of their leaving this world. So grndmother's funeral was called for 1:00 P.M., It was a cold day, all of the grandchildren living in Lodz attended the funeral, as well as the rest of the family. Grandma Meriam was burried right next to her mother Rywka Neuhaus.

My father made the eulogy at the cemetery funeral house. The eulogy was in Jewish, but his words were like pearls, he described my beloved grandma just as she was and all her good deeds. How good she was to her children, her family and strangers. My father

said that he personally feels as if he lost his mother all over again, and what a tragedy this is to all of us to be the first "Korban al Kidush Cha-Shem" because of the Nazi regime. My father's eulogy touched us all, for we knew that he was telling the truth and that we all lost the matriarch of our family. We were crying like babies, it was a sad experience. When we looked at our grandpa, this tall, strong man, suddenly looked like a broken up lost sheep. They were married when they were sixteen years old, they brought up five lovely children, most of them were married except the youngest son who was only in his early twenties. How could a man be transformed into nothing within only a few hours? None of us understood the situation. After the funeral ceremony we all went to grandpa's place. My big brother and the rest of us were ordered to go home and leave my mother there, which we did.

We returned home, and we found my father's brother and his family there, for they were staying with us. They originally lived in Kalish but because of the war, they were under go from city to city, and they landed up in the city of Uniejow, which was the birth place of their new son-in-law, whose father was a Rabbi in this city. Their stay did not last very long the Nazis burned the house of the Rabbi and again they were left with no place to go. They had to find a new place to put their belonging, and be able

to find sleeping quarters. While In this city the SS rounded up all young men, and shot at them at random, one of these men was my cousin Gitel's husband. And that is a story which I wrote about already. This is just to tell, while my father's family came to Lodz, and stayed with us, until we found for them a separate apartment in our building.

We returned home depressed, angry, upset about the loss of our dear grandma, hungry, we missed our mother, and this was the first loss in my mother's family. We were not used to funerals, everybody in the family were fairly young. We felt sorry for our dear mother, and worried, how she was going to accept this void in her life. We were all hungry and I was elected to take care of that, because Ida my father and mother felt that she belongs with her father and family and besides, you sit Shivah, were the diseased lived. I was elected to make supper, I had no idea about cooking, all I knew was to butter my bread, but my cousin Hanka came to the rescue. She was going to teach me how to make a potato soup, and with her help I was able to cook a soup, and eventually serve it to my siblings. Eventually our aunt Baila took over the kitchen for the duration of the "Shiva" period, so I was freed of my obligation, except for washing dishes and pots and pans.

We visited mother at her parent's house, the place was full of people. My grandparents lived in this place for over forty years, so they made many friends, and they had a lot of family. This was still the beginning of Nazi occupation, and one could still venture out during the day. When the Shiva was over my mother returned home, she was very depressed, and what added to her depression was the behavior of some of the people who came to pay a Shiva call. Grandpa and grandma prepared themselves for the war, they bought sacks of flour, sugar, beans, you name it and they bought it. The people who saw the display of groceries in the kitchen, without any permission, cut into these sacks and helped themselves. Mother said that it looked like a robbery, she could not stand seeing it, made a horrible impression on her. Here she lost a mother under such terrible circumstances, and these people were only interested what they can grab, even though nobody could be sure that they will survive. This was a war, the Nazis were all over, there were killings and shootings, these were not normal times, the least one would expect from your fellow Jew is some feelings. I guess from the poor element this was far fetched, all they knew is to fill their stomachs, it did not matter from whom they took the goods. In spite of what happened during this Shiva, I would like to stress that the majority of people were not like that, this was just a handful of nasty characters that did not

consider anybody other than themselves, and we should not judge everybody according to a small number of Jews.

NOVEMBER 1939

The Beginning of the Ghetto Rumors In November of 1939 the Weegee Board became very famous, people were looking for answers, people were looking for a better tomorrow, for nobody knew what the next hour would bring and what new tragedies were awaiting us. Rumors were going around, that this particular coming Friday night the Nazis, were going to execute the Jews in massive numbers, but nobody knew which neighborhood would be picked first. So they started to use the Weegee Boards, hoping to get the answers to the unknown. Unlike the Jews of Egypt, who had to mark their homes in order to be saved, this was just the opposite. The Nazis marked the Jewish houses in order to annihilate them. They physically marked each Jewish home with a red stripe to identify it as a Jewish home. We did not have such a vivid imagination, as to think that this most cultured nation could be capable of such atrocities. The Nazis, with their brutal and lawless fashion, exercised almost unlimited power to murder the Jews. We sat in our houses scared to think of what our future beheld and where the Germans would send us. The general talk was that they would send us to Warsaw. Because of these rumors, we sent all of our bedding,

some linen, and other things to Warsaw. This we did so that if we ever got there, at least we would have some of our necessities because the winters in Poland were usually very severe. Jews at this stage were not permitted to be involved in any business transactions so this transfer was very difficult to accomplish. For this we needed our grandfather's protekcja, or protektzia. He was very good friends with Mr. Buhler, who owned a big trucking company. And even though the Nazis were in full power in Lodz and all over Poland, Mr. Buhler did this favor for my grandfather. We left ourselves with a few blankets and some covers, while the good bedding was sent to Warsaw, thinking that we would follow there soon. As you probably know by now, we never went to Warsaw, and remained in Lodz-Litzmanstadt as the Germans called it. Lodz was officially annexed to the German Reich. What an honor! Times were very unsure. Nobody knew what tomorrow would bring. We heard all sorts of rumors, and then there was talk of a ghetto, some place in Baluty, the poorest Jewish section in Lodz. Nobody wanted to believe that this project would materialize, and they felt that this was just talk. How could the Nazis relocate all the Jews in Lodz to such a small area, which consisted of mostly single room apartments? Rooms without running water and toilets, rooms without any modern equipments to which we were so accustomed. Things were happening very fast. Without any warning they were taking people off the street to do all sorts of work. Some of these people were

never seen or heard from again. People were panicking and less and less people would leave their homes fearing what could happen to them if they did. In the meantime (as I already wrote about) my grandmother suffered a heart attack, and died instantly. The Gestapo who suspected my grandfather of harboring ammunition brought on this heart attack. They arrived at my grandparent's home and bombarded the house, destroyed their personal belongings, destroyed things in their store. When they were unsuccessful in finding anything, they beat my grandfather up and made him suffer for no reason. Needless to say, my grandmother was quite traumatized by this awful experience. She died that same day. As per Jewish law, her funeral took place a few hours later. My mother was the oldest daughter, and she had experienced a wonderful relationship with her mother. This sudden loss of her mother was a great shock to her. Little did my mother know that a few weeks later her father and her youngest brother and housekeeper would be deported to a distant town? The Nazis chose to take the wealthy Jews first, and then the people from Zgierska Street and deported them to Izbica. Izbica was a small town near the city of Zamosc, in the eastern part of Poland, not too far from what was Russia in 1939. This deportation was done in the middle of the night so that nobody had a chance to run away or hide from the SS. The Nazis would enter homes, and drag the people out of bed, and did not let them take anything with them. They

were lucky if the Nazis allowed them to get dressed, and not just leave in their nightgowns or pajamas. When my mother found out about this, she was very worried, as she had no idea where they sent her father and her brother. She had no way of finding out where they sent them or what happened to them. When she went to their house, to check on them, she found a notice on the door. The notice was put there by the Gestapo and it read: "Beschlagnahmen": This meant that this property belonged to the Nazis, and if anyone tore down the notice, they would be automatically shot and killed. This was a very difficult time for my mother. She had lost her beloved mother recently that was very difficult for her to bear. Her fear had no limits. She prayed that her father and brother were still alive, and maybe that they would be able to get in touch with her soon. My mother's prayers came through. She finally got word from them that they were in the city of Izbica. My uncle Abram called and asked that we should send them some bedding and gave the address where they were living. Besides bedding, they asked for clothing, money and the hidden jewelry that was hidden in the safe and other places in the store. This was not a simple matter to accomplish. How could we get into the house that was sealed by the SS? After a few weeks my uncle Abram returned to Lodz. He was a very smart young man, and through negotiations (which cost him a lot of money) he was able to get permission to open the door, and get inside his house. Naturally,

he knew exactly where the valuables were hidden, and was able to get them. Once my uncle had all these things, and then came the problem of delivering them to my grandfather. My beloved brother Lajser volunteered to deliver these things to my grandfather in Izbice. He had no idea what a journey like that entailed it was a very long journey, especially since he was carrying on himself all these precious belongings. He had to travel by bus, by train, and whichever transportation was available that he could find in order to get there. He knew how important it was to deliver these things, so that our grandfather might be able to survive, for he had absolutely no other means to live on, in spite of the fact that he was such a rich man. After this very long journey, my brother accomplished his mission, and my grandfather was given enough to provide for himself for his life in Izbica. And now it was time for my brother to plan his return trip to Lodz. He had nothing on him: no baggage, no money, and no valuables. He thought that it would be an easy task to get back to Lodz. However, that was not the case. Things were getting more difficult every day. He had to smuggle from town to town. Jews were not allowed to travel, so Lajser had to bribe people all the way in order to return home. My brother Lajser was a tall, strong, young man, not afraid of anybody. But that did not work with the SS. When he finally got to the outskirts of Lodz in Bzeziny, the SS got hold of him and they beat him up. They forced him to say repeatedly in German: "Sag

dass du dem Krieg voltest, sag dass Rosevelt is ein Jude, und dass seine name Rosenfeld is". In translation: "Say that you wanted this war, say that Roosevelt is a Jew, say that his name is Rosenfeld". They beat him so, that he could hardly walk, and then finally they released him. When he got home he was all swollen. He was horribly bruised and it took quite some time for him to get better. This was the last time that my brother ventured out of Lodz again. He felt very good, that he was able to help my grandfather, and that now we did not have to worry about him. Izbica was not far from Zamosc, where grandfather had some relatives, The town was very close to the Russian boarder, and we all felt that the Russias were friendly to the Jews, and that meant to us that my grandfather would be okay. After all, he was comparatively young. However, things did not go according to our hopes. In 1941, somebody approached my mother and told her that they heard about the tragedy. My mother did not understand, what this person was trying to tell her. When she questioned, the person told my mother that they got word that my grandfather passed away. This was a terrible shock for my mother. Her hair literally turned completely gray overnight. Grandfather was basically a strong healthy person so how had he died? After much investigation, we found out that he traveled to Warsaw for an operation, and then returned to Izbica. Soon after, his life came to an end. He was alone without his wife, without his children and

grandchildren, in a strange city far away from home. Suddenly my mother found herself without any parents, all in a period of two years. This was very difficult for her to accept and she had a very hard time dealing with this loss. We tried very hard to help her bear this loss, but it was not easy. We tried to tell her that this was wartime and that at least he had lived in peace. The Nazis did not abuse him during his time in Izbaca, although we had no proof that this was really true. But we wanted to spare our mother any guilt feelings. She was very attached to her parents and that was the reason that she never wanted to leave Poland before the war. She simply could not bear to be separated from them. The days and months that followed kept us all busy with constant problems, illnesses and hunger. Our lives were filled with troubles, as every day was filled with more tragedy. People were dying all around us. Family, friends, acquaintances and the best of the Jewish population were disappearing from this world. All because of the German's hatred of the Jews. People were hungry, weak, disillusioned and the infectious diseases were so rampant, there was no room for the sick in the hospitals. There was no medication available to cure the sick, and the only cure was death, which put an end to the terrible inhuman sufferings. The epidemic of dysentery killed an enormous amount of people. My family was among all others who had a real battle to survive.

DECEMBER 1939

Early in December 1939, we were told by the "Bekantmachungen", which were posted all over the city that, there is going to be a ghetto. According to the Bekantmachung the ghetto was to be located in one of the poorest section of Lodz, which was "Baluty". None of us believed that this project would ever be materialize. The location assigned for the ghetto was very small. How could such a small place absorb over 200,000 Jews? Leave it to the Nazis, their orders were carried out, just like they wanted them to be.

The SS was throwing people out of their homes, of their partments, just like you would throw a dog out of the house and let him loose. So all these people had to find a place where to live in the ghetto. As the weeks went by, we realized that this is no joke, that this is reality, so we started to negotiate about a room in the building that belonged to my grandfather in this part of the city of Lodz.

1939 was one of the coldest winters that I could remember, the snow seemed never to melt, there was ice and sleet wherever you went on the streets of Lodz, the frost was biting adding to our mood. Slowly the people who had a chance started to move their bedding and anything they were able to get hold of. They carried it on their backs or sleds, towards the ghetto. This was a sad exodus from their homes that they occupied for years and maybe

even for generations.

Zachodnia, Stodolniana, Lutomierska all the way to Baluty was a black mass of people, who could hardly pool their mere belongings, which they tried so hard to save. This marked the beginning of the "Unfortunate Jewish Era", full of macabre suffering and eventually, annihilation of the entire Jewish race. We were not among the Jews who were allowed to take their belongings. By miracle we were able to smuggle out my father's library and the cabinet, or as we called it the "Special Schrank", which was the most important treasure for my father. This was not an easy task, every opportunity we had, we would smuggle some of his "Sforim". And then make sure that nobody saw us doing this, we would pool the way to the ghetto. We completed our assignment after a few days, and our father was very grateful to us.

I will never forget this sight which could only be duplicated in a movie, it most depressing to all of us. We were forbidden to take that which was lawfully ours, and that was very hard for us young people to accept.

Finally we were told that as of February 1940 no Jew will be allowed to live in the city of Lodz or like they called it then Litzmanstadt, other than the ghetto.

Because my parents knew a lot of people and of course, our dear Rabbi Trajstman, they received permission to get a room in the building that belonged to my grandfather in this part of Lodz.

This reassured my parents that they would at least have a place where to go, that we will not have to sleep on the street of the ghetto like other people had to do. Then rumors spread that, the Gestapo came up with a new project, that all Jews will be sent out of Litzmanstadt. And that Lodz will be Juden rein, after all this was the German Reich territory, and that does not sit right with having Jews in the German Reich. One evening we noticed that our block was marked with red chock. Meaning that we were chosen to be deported to G-d knows where. Rumors were that this wasgoing to be one of bloodiest nights we could imagine.

So the family decided, that as soon as my mother will finish her cooking for the Shabath, I was elected to take my father and my uncle Schmil to our room in the ghetto.

The reason I was chosen was because at that time they left the young girls alone. My mother quickly prepared the food for the two men, she gave me two dishes, two table settings, and we were ready to leave for the ghetto.

As we were leaving our apartment, I heard somebody call my name. I turned around and saw our janitor Grzegoz running after us.

Grzegorz was a Polak when the Poles were in Power, he became a good German while the Germans were in Lodz and a good Russian when the Russian came to Lodz. Grzegoz was Ukrainian, which was very convenient for him.

Anyhow, he approached me and asked me to open my briefcase and to show him what I was carrying there. In his most authorative voice

he said: "Give me what you have there". Grzegorz, I replied: "There is nothing of value, all I have is food my father and my uncle". He looked at the content of my briefcase and finally he gave the O.K. I burst into tears, after all I was once a playmate to his daughter and his sons, how could he treat me like this.

Just a few months ago we treated him so well, my parents were always very nice to him, shelling out money for different occasions.

I expected him to help me he did not have to treat me like a rubber, like a beggar, and humiliate me this way. All the way to the ghetto I was hiding my tears back from my father and my uncle, I kept walking behind them so they should not notice my red eyes. It was enough that we had to be separated for Shabbath, our first separation since the war started.

At last we arrived in the ghetto, this gave an opportunity to see the room we were assigned to. The building looked very familiar,

after all we used to visit my beloved grandparents who lived in the house in front of this building. Their apartment was adjacent to their business. There was a very big court yard which had many various warehouses, most of them belonged to my grandfather. There was a stable with many horses I used to be fascinated with these horses, because where we lived in the center of the city no stables were allowed. The front of the building consisted of a wholesale china store, and my grandparent's business that was the big Wholesale of Hardware and Building Equipments. So all this was

not strange to me except that I have never been to the upper floors of this tall building in the yard.

So we climbed the stairs up to the fourth floor. There was a long corridor, our room was at the very end of the corridor. We unlocked the door and walked into this furnished room. The owners of this room were deported, and everything was left behind. The room had two windows which faced the Zgierska street. From time to time one could see the street cars. The sidewalks belonged to the ghetto, while street was not part of the ghetto.

There were two beds pushed together, a sofa. To the right was a big wardrobe that divided the so called bedroom, dinning room from the kitchen. Next to the sofa was a small table and chairs, this was our dinning room. There was no walking space, just enough room to get by from one end to the other. Near the window stood my fathers bookcase (the schrank), the only thing that belonged to us. The kitchen consisted of tile stove which heated by coal.

There was a coal cabinet to storage coal. There was a bench on which top stood two pails of water. The water had to be fetched from the water well pomp which in the middle of the back yard. To right opposite the stove stood a dilapidated kitchen cabinet, with some utensils and plates. On the left side of the oven was a small storage cabinet, which served as a table. There was no running water, there was no toilet, no bathroom. The room was cold, and pretty clean. There were no curtains on the windows, quite different from what we were used in our house in the city.

As a small girl I often wondered how poor people lived, and often

wished to live in these poor tenements, with lots of children all over. But this was only a dream of a child, in-experienced, an innocent child unfamiliar with poverty. And I have to admit that was not sorry about this move. I felt that at last I will be an equal to the hard working factory people and feel their hard life which was alien to me.

Since it was Friday I had to hurry back home. I kissed my father, and said goodbye to uncle Schmiel, and left the room. All the way home I had the picture of this room, and of how we will all be able to sleep there.

Suddenly I was distracted by some German soldiers and the SS, which brought me back to reality. I passed the Gestapo building in front of which I saw a group of Jews crying bitterly. On the next corner I saw SS-men beating young and old Jews, pulling their beards. On Nowomiejska I saw a couple of soldiers putting fire to a man's beard, and beating him with a metal club.

It did not matter, who-ever they could get hold of, this was their pass time, their entertainment. I could not believe what I was seeing, I was ready to run I could not accept these terrible things. I had no courage to look reality in the face.

I felt like running away, but I was afraid, that the Gestapo would realize that I was Jewish and that they would do the same to me as they did to these suffering Jews.

So I kept on walking towards my home. I just about made it before my mother was ready to light the Shabath candles. Then everybody came to me and wanted to find out, about the ghetto. They wanted

to know how it looks, and how uncle Schmiel and our father thought of the place. After what I witnessed on my way home from the ghetto, it was very difficult for me to give them an honest answer. I did not wish to subject them to my fears. Therefore, my answers were very short, and to the point, at least I said: "We will have a roof over our heads, in case they tell us to leave this house", and I stopped right there. For all of us it was a sad Friday evening without our father.

My oldest brother made kidush for us, and for the first time we felt lonely and afraid for the future.

My mother sensed my fear, and tried to get me away from my worries. She told us that, when she was first married, her father gave her the very same room which they assigned to us in the ghetto. As a young bride she lived there until she gave birth to the first child. Then she moved to the center of the city. This was a real coincidence, she said this room has many happy memories for her. In view of the fact what I witnessed today nothing really helped me to feel better.

We were all very quiet this evening, our ears were attuned to every noise, we knew that according to the rumors, this was going to be the night.....³

And suddenly there was a knock on the door, we stood up, and expected the familiar voice: "Raus, Raus, Alle Manner Raus". When we opened the door, there was a pleasant surprise, there was Szlamek the son of our neighbor, who came to tell us, that Palmer the SS-man who was stationed in their house told them that our

house, will not be included in this evening's action. Szlamek's parents knew that my father was gone for the Shabath, and to make us feel better they sent their son with the good news. This was a real blessing, our father and uncle Schmiel was safe in the ghetto, and we were safe here in our apartment. We thanked Szlamek for this wonderful news. We bolted the door, and everybody went to sleep peacefully that night. I had a very rough time, I could not forget all the things I saw today, and what could we do to stop this horrible threatment of Jews. While I was very happy about the news Szlamek told us, I still kept on thinking of the experience I had that Friday. The future brought with even more terrible things for us Jews, my fear was justified, but there was nothing I could do to turn our destiny around.

CHAIM RUMKOWSKI

Chaim Rumkowski came from Wilno. He was a widower, he tried very hard to be in charge of the Zionist Organization, but he did not succeed. Then he was involved in a terrible insurance scandal so he ran off, and years later returned to Lodz, like from out of the ashes. When he returned, he directed his interest in the Jewish Orphanage in Helenowek, to which he devoted most of his time.

There were rumors that Rumkowski had sexual relations not only with personnel at the orphanage but even with some of the orphans.

While Rumkowski appeared like the Aelteste der Juden, the elder of the Jews, the Germans appointed him the president of the Lodz Ghetto in 1940. Soon after, the rumors spread that he was interested in remarrying, and that anybody that wanted to marry him, would receive an extra bread and a ration of honey. As he was not very popular, he eventually threatened a young female lawyer with deportation, if she refused to marry him.

In order to save her life and that of her family, she married him. Eventually, they adopted a young boy.

The summer of 1941 was the height of Rumkowski's popularity. His picture was all over on money bills, on postal stamps, on buildings, any place you turned it seemed that he was the king of the ghetto, and he acted accordingly.

People were scared of him. He was the master and he decided whether you were to stay alive in the ghetto or whether you were to be deported to the unknown.

Rumkowski was authoritative and power hungry and therefore, he allowed no one the chance to handle the ghetto matters and possibly to negotiate with the Germans in a different way. He alone dealt with these murderers.

At the beginning of the war, when the Germans came to Lodz and asked for Jewish leaders, Rabbi Symcha Trejstman stepped up for the job, he was willing to help.

He was the son of the last chief rabbi of Lodz, a well-educated person. He had attended the Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin. Rabbi Trejstman had more experience with the Germans and was more qualified to handle the situation than Rumkowski. Rumkowski was very jealous of Rabbi Trejstman, who was a threat to him, and he therefore did terrible things to him.

I heard from Rabbi Trejstman himself who was a very dear friend of my father that the famous Thursday that the Germans were going to deport the Jews from Lodz, he was able to convince them otherwise and they listened to him.

I do not try to say that Rabbi Trejstman would have saved the Jews of Lodz, but I am convinced that what happened under Rumkowski's reign would not have been so easily agreed to by Rabbi Trejstman.

Rumkowski made life miserable for Rabbi Trejstman. It got so bad that Rabbi Trejstman finally left with his family for Warsaw. He received his certificates to go to Israel. However, the Germans did not let him leave Warsaw and I was told in the Lodzer Ghetto that eventually the Germans killed him and all of his family, except for one brother, who miraculously survived this war.

Jealousy is a sickness, and that drove Rumkowski to become the king, the dictator of the Lodzer Ghetto. He was sick with power. I do not accuse him of wanting the

destruction of the Jews, but I accuse him of a lack of opposition to the Nazis. He had no right to follow their orders the way he did.

There is no difference whether the Germans would have killed us in the ghetto, or later on in Auschwitz, Chelmno or Treblinka. The only difference would have been that we would not have to slave and work with our last drop of blood to contribute to the welfare of the German government.

They worked us from early morning to late at night. There was no food, and we had no strength to work, no strength to walk. Our bodies were on their last leg. Our homes had no heat as there was no coal to cook our measly food, and that is how we survived, so we could be sent to concentration camps, not for survival, but to be killed after we have given them our last drops of blood.

There were other leaders in Poland who; had more determination, more guts, more love for their brothers and sisters, and did handle their ghettos differently than Chaim Rumkowski.

I realize that his task was not an easy one, but where does a person take this responsibility all by himself? In my eyes he was too old, too afraid and too selfish. He watched out for himself and his family only and did not truly consider the 200,000 other Jews.

In December of 1939, Uebelhoer introduced the project of a Jewish ghetto for the city of Lodz. The Nazis chose the poorest section of the city, which consisted of small dwellings. Most of these apartments consisted of single rooms.

The Jews ere forbidden to live on certain streets, and if they were found there, they were killed. In fact the SS massacred Jews, which they found on Pitrkowska Street.

They killed 200 Jews and they also went after the Jews near Lakowa and Zakatna Street. They robbed them, they asked them to undress and transported them to the forest in Zgierz and killed them there.

These happenings force a lot of Jews to run away to Warsaw, where they hoped things would not be as bad as in Lodz, Litzmannstadt that became the German Reich.

So the ghetto became a fact. Zgierska, Limanowskiego and the Baluter Ring had 3 gates, where people could cross from one side of the ghetto to the other. The Center of Zgierska Street did not belong to the ghetto and that is where the trolley car went. That was where the Poles could spit on us and call us names as they traveled through our horrible living quarters.

Soon after they established the Kripo (Kriminalpolizeiliche Zweigstelle), whose members were Germans, Volksdeutsche, Poles and Jews? Their job was to denounce Jews who still had something left that had any worth like diamonds, gold or money. Once they found you with any valuables, your life was not worth anything. They beat you until you were almost dead. The Ghettoverwaltung did their share too in order to rob us of whatever was left. The Haupttreuhandstelle Ost (H.T.O.) was similar in robbing us of our possessions. I especially remember the two-week period, from 8:00AM to 5:00PM; we were forced to give up our valuables, for fear of death. They gave my mother nothing for the jewelry, and for her father's business and its merchandise. She was only happy that her father was not around to see what happened to his business as it was handed over to the Germans.

In some of some of the documents I saw that the German authorities said that they paid 6 RM for each working Jew while it only cost them 50 pf to keep him up. In the beginning of the ghetto, the upkeep of a single Jew cost them 23pf. That was due to the fact there was practically no food.

When they established factories for Jewish labor, or as they called them Polish in Polish “Resorts” and in German “Betriebs”, they gave us a little more food. Imagine, now we cost them 80pf. Do not think that increase meant so much more food for us. G-D forbid! They increased the rations insignificantly and gave us food that was not fit for an animal. And yet, we had to eat it, as we had no choice. We were imprisoned in this hermetical ghetto.

Here are some names of The Germans who were in charge of Lodzer
Ghetto

1939 Regierungspresident: Dr. Uebelhoer

Polizeipresident Schaefer (SS-Brigadierfuehrer)

Schwind

Bruruder

Krajin

Lemcke

Wilhelm Koppe

Hildenbrandt

Bach-Zalewski

Robert Schweclert

Ghettoverwaltung Czarnula, Bradfisch

Krippe Neumam, Fuchs

Sturmbahnfuehrer Rapp, Meyer

Transport Abteilung Degner

Kriminal-Oberassistent Siebert, Richter

Uebernahme von Eisenwaren Kurt Brauer, Grund

Oberbuergermaister J.V. Schiffer

Kriminalinspektor Bracken

Kriminaloberinspektor Richter

Regierungspresident (Vize) Dr. Moser

Buergermeister Dr. Marder

Dr. Moldenhauer und Herr Biebow Oberbuergermeister von
Litzmannstadt und
Regierungsrat von Herder.

Amtsleiter Hans Biebow

Gauleiter Greiser

In 1793 there was a total of 191 Jews living in Lodz, but soon After, the Jewish population mushroomed very quickly. The economic Life as a whole was very much dependent on it's Jewish and German Citizens. Because of these citizens, Lodz became a very successful Large textile center in Poland; in fact they called Lodz the Second Manchester, which was a huge textile center in England.

The Polish church was very much against the Jews and against the Jewish religion in general. It was well known that anti-Semitism Was a Christian illness? They accused all the Jews of killing Christ, and the local priests in the villages and the cardinals in The big cities, all were well informed of "In capita ET in Membris", which implied that the Jews were guilty of killing Christ. They all preached hatred, and blamed the Jews for Christ's Death.

In spite of all this, the Jews lived in Poland for almost a Thousand years. However, in order to evade anti-Semitism, they Made sure to live with their own kind.

Anti-Semitism became very pronounced in the second half of the 1930's, after Hitler came to power in Germany, and especially After the death of Marshal Jozef Pilsudski.

The Poles learned very fast from the Germans. In Lodz the

Situation was not so bad, because the Jews of Lodz were very Organized. The Bund, or the Jewish socialists, was very active And their vote was very important for the party.

This prevented most outright displays of anti-Semitism, until Hitler's propaganda slowly invaded Lodz too.

The new organization called "Endecka Partia Krajowa", which was an Anti-Semitic party became active in the early part of 1938. From Then on life, began to change in Lodz.

When the Germans occupied Lodz in September of 1939, they issued All sorts of prohibitions. From September 18 to December 1939, There were to be no religious observances in synagogues.

All Jewish bank accounts were to be frozen. People were chosen at Random and forced into brutal types of labor. This was known as "lapanki". A curfew was imposed for all Jews from 7:00AM-5:00PM. Jews were forced to wear the yellow Star of David with the Inscription "JUDE".

Lodz was incorporated into the German Reich on November 7, 1939, And SS Brigadenfuehrer Friedrich Uebelhoer, became the chief of Police of Warthenland. The chief of Police of Lodz was SS Brigadenfuhrer Johannes The chief of Gestapo was SS Hauptsturmfuhrer, Dr.Otto Bradfish and SS Obersturmfuhrer Guenter Fuchs, who eventually replaced Robert Scheefer. The head of the Ghetto Verwaltung was Hans Biebow, who was from Bremen, Germany,

Where he had his own lucrative business. He had 250 people working for him in his coffee business and his income was said to bring in about a million German marks. However, to avoid going to the front, he opted to be in charge of the Lodzer Ghetto.

The German natives of Lodz who did not share in the views of the Nazis and their policies were not tolerated. Robert Geyer, Dr. Julie Bursche (bishop of the Evangelical Augsburg Church), Oscar Seidler, leader of the German Socialist Party in Lodz, were persecuted by the Nazis. The Gestapo murdered Geyer in October 1939. Busche was placed in the Oranienburg Concentration camp, where he died in 1942, and Seidler was incarcerated with his son.

The Lodzer ghetto was named after Karl Litzmann, the German General who fell in the battle of Lodz during World War One in 1915. Most people came to the ghetto in the beginning of January 1940.

Shortly after the Germans entered Lodz they called a meeting of the Jewish Committee of which Chaim Rumkowski was a member. They picked Rumkowski from the rest of the Committee and appointed him as the "Aelteste der Juden".

They picked him because of his gray hair, which made him look very distinguished.

They could not have picked a better ally. There were still 31

Members of the Beirat, these were well known Jewish people, However, the Germans did not want them. They took them to the Outskirts of Lodz into the woods and shot them all.

So Rumkowski was the only member left from the pre-war Jewish Committee. He was an omnipotent autocrat, he did not let anybody Negotiate with the Germans. He alone dealt with these murderers.

Chaim Rumkowski was born on February 1877 in Ilno-Russia. He was a Widower, he came to Lodz from Wilno. He tried very hard to be in Charge of the Zionist organization, but did not succeed. Then he Was involved in a terrible insurance scandal so he run off, and a Year later returned to Lodz like from out of ashes.

When he returned, he directed his interests in the Jewish Orphanage in Helenowek to which he devoted most of his time. There Were rumors that Rumkowski had sexual relations not only with his? Personnel at the orphanage but even with some of the orphans.

He was married in the ghetto the second time. He married Regina Weinberg who was born in Lodz in 1907. She was single and was a Lawyer by profession. At the time she was 34 years his junior.

Rumkowski threatened her that if she does not marry him he would Deport her and her family. So naturally she had no choice and Married him in 1941. She again like the first wife had no children With Rumkowski. Some time later they adapted a boy of whom they Took good care.

At the beginning of the war, when the Germans came to Lodz and Asked for Jewish leaders, (before they appointed Chaim Rumkowski) Rabbi Symcha Trejstman stepped up for the job, he was The son of the last Chief Rabbi of Lodz. He was educated in the Rabbinical Seminary in Berlin. He spoke a perfect German and was More qualified to handle the situation than Rumkowski. So after Rumkowski was appointed to this job he was very jealous of Rabbi Trejstman who was a threat to him. Therefore he did terrible things to Rabbi Trejstman. I personally was present when the Rabbi Trejstman who was a very dear friend of my father told about the Way Rumkowski tried to make his life miserable in the ghetto. On the famous "Thursday" when the Germans were going to deport the Jews from Lodz, it was Rabbi Trejstman who was able to convince The Germans to stop it. Fortunately this deportation did not take place, and people were Very happy about it. I do not try to say that Rabbi Trejstman would have saved the Jews Have Lodz, but I am convinced that what happened under Rumkowski's Reign would not have been so easily agreed to by Rabbi Trejstman. Rumkowski made life miserable for Rabbi Trejstman, it got to be so Bad, that when the Rabbi received and affidavit to go to Israel, He was forced to leave Lodz for Warsaw. However, he never reached Israel he and his family, which consisted of his wife, his mother,

Five sons a married daughter with her husband and baby were killed
In Warsaw. From what I was told, his brother miraculously survived
The war.

Jealousy is a sickness and that is what drove Chaim Rumkowski to
Become the King, the dictator of the Lodzer Ghetto. He was sick
With power. I do not accuse him of wanting the distraction of
Jews, but I accuse him of a lack of opposition to the Nazis, he
Had no right to follow their orders the way he did. There is no
Difference whether the Germans would have killed us in the ghetto,
or later on in Chelmno, Treblinka, or Auschwitz. The only
Difference would have been that we would not have to slave and
Work with our last drop of blood, which contributed, to the
welfare

Of the German government.

There were other leaders in Poland, who had more determination,
More guts, more love for their brothers and sisters, and did
Handle their ghettos differently than did Chaim Rumkowski. I
Realize that his task was not an easy one, but where does a person
Take this responsibility all by himself?

Before the ghetto was established, the Jews were forbidden to live
On certain Streets, and if they were found there, they were
killed.

In fact the SS massacred Jews when they found on Piotrkowska
Street. They killed 200 Jews and they went after the Jews near

Lakowa and Zakatna Street. They robbed them, they asked to undress and transported them to the forest in Zgierz and killed them There. These happenings forced a lot of Jews to run away to Warsaw, where they hoped things would be better.

There were 3 large synagogues in Lodz. The "Altsteitische Shul" on Wolborska, the Vilker Shul and the fancy Liberal (Reform) Shul on Aleja Kosciuszki.

Most of them went up in fire in the beginning of November 1939. However, the Nazis made the Jewish congregants dress up in their Prayer shalls, they asked the cantor and his choir to pray and Sing, and then they asked them to read the Torah, all that they Filmed, and eventually let this beautiful synagogue goes up in fire Too.

In November of 1940 there was an appeal by Rumkowski for people to Work outside the ghetto, and of course there were many good Promises to go with it, so many people volunteered. Nobody ever Heard anything from them, and none of them returned to the ghetto.

In December of 1939 Uebelhover introduced the project of a Jewish Ghetto for the city of Lodz. The Nazis chose the poorest section Of the city which consisted of very small dwellings, most of them

Single rooms. Almost all of them had neither running water nor toilets

(Only outhouses). They assigned 6 people to one room. It did not matter, they even put strangers to share a room. There was a shortage of rooms, so in the beginning like in our room there were 14-20 people forced into one room. We had people sleeping on the table, under the table on the floor, there was no space left for anybody else. We could not refuse them, they needed a roof over their heads. There was a lot of confusion, we did not know what to expect. It was a big problem and very difficult to place all these people in this small ghetto.

The Poles did not vacate their apartments yet, and once they threw us out of our apartments we were not allowed in the city anymore. Most of us were thrown out of our apartments, we were just told to leave. They did not let us take anything, we left just with what we had on.

The Ghetto-Verwaltung became the sole owner of all Jewish possessions, and that was according to the ruling of Gauleiter Greiser.

When we got to the room, which was in the building that belonged to

My grand-father, (who was deported in November of 1939). We inherited the room from the people who were deported in the fall of 1939.

It was a terrible situation, none of us were used to such poverty
And lack of off space. It is almost impossible to describe the
Difference between our apartment in the city and this dingy room
Which was supposed to serve us all, as a bedroom, dinning room
Kitchen etc.

It took a few months until thing were falling in it's place.
People needed means to make a living, people needed jobs. You
Could not exist without money, without food, and that created
Trouble.

So slowly Rumkowski established resorts, which were called
Factories, in which people worked for the Wehrmacht as well as the
Civilian German population. There were all sorts of resort from
Dress factories, shoe factories to metallurgical factories, you
name

It and the ghetto had it. There were many hospitals, pharmacies,
And even a post office. Naturally all that took time to organize,
And that we have to give credit to Chaim Rumkowski. The ghetto
Had their own police, their own court and prison. But in spite of
That, the poverty and hunger in the ghetto was not to be
Described. There were demonstrations going on, the very famous one
On Lutomierska street. People were hungry, people were sick, and
All Rumkowski's promises were not fulfilled. So naturally angry
People protested the terrible conditions. The Jewish police was
Not able to stop the demonstration, the people were fed up.

Believe or not Rumkowski requested the German riot police to be sent into the ghetto. The Germans used guns to stop this demonstration, and unfortunately quite a number of people were killed because of this. So because of this instance the people were afraid of Rumkowski the king of the ghetto.

Rumkowski would slap a person in the face or kick him in the stomach, he was happy to perform these sadistic and insane pranks because they made him feel important, he had very good teachers. He made sure that his picture was on the postal stamp, on the ghetto money even on the coins, on the ghetto newspaper. His picture hung in every public place.

His famous motto was: "Work and Peace" at any rate, therefore those Jews who were unfit to work were deported and eventually killed. He was in charge of who should stay alive in the ghetto or who should be deported to the unknown?

When he visited the Warsaw ghetto on September 6, 1940 he bragged about the Lodzer ghetto and told them about the miracles he did there.

I would like to add that in the beginning of the ghetto there were many schools for young children as well as a gymnasium. There was even a home on Marysin for 12,000 children who were well taken care of. There were also many kibbutzim whose young people worked in agriculture. This too was on Marysin, and they called these

places dzialki.

There even was a theater, a music hall, of which the performers were ghetto volunteers? Some of them were famous violinist and actors.

So for his we have to give Rumkowski credit, after all he did a little good to the Jews in the ghetto.

The ghetto had no contact with outside world. In 1940 the Germans received 6RM for each working Jew and it cost them 40-50Pf per person, so you see how high their profit was.

As time went on, people suffered even more hunger. And the weather was not very kind to us. It was bitter cold, there was no coal or wood to heat the apartments. In fact people were cutting up their furniture, and whatever wood they could find. They would even steal wooden fences to keep the cold out of their frozen rooms. They would take the fences from the courtyards, and eventually you could walk from one building to another there were no divisions anymore. It all became one big backyard.

This was a very severe winter. I remember that we slept in our clothes, we covered ourselves with whatever we could find in the room. When you stretched out your arm from under the cover, the frost in the air hit you at once. There was ice and snow on the walls, it was brutal.

Even the climate was against us. The people were tired and sick, They walked like drunkards. The only medicine that was available Was aspirin, how could one cure dysentery, typhoid, tuberculosis, And the flu with aspirin? So now you know what the end result was, You just sat and watched your dear ounces disappear slowly from This world and there was nothing you could do to help them, other Than just be there for them, and witness their misery.

The food rations they gave were not enough to feed a baby, how Could a grown up survive on it? Most people ate their rations the First day, and the rest of the week they were starved, how could They survive, no wonder that the death toll was so high.

The soups we got from the community kitchen were so watery, you Kept on looking for a piece of potato, but all you could do is Look, for you hardly ever found this treasure, unless you knew the Person that was giving out the soups in these kitchens. There was a famous song going around in the ghetto:" Pani wydelaczko a bissel tifer, a bissel gedachter" which means: Miss who was giving Out the soup, please put the laddle a little deeper and a little And scoop a thicker soup".

The hunger was so great that all you have to do is look at the Famous ghetto picture where men or women were pulling the truck With human excrement in order to earn some food.

Potato peels that were usually meant for horses were given to the

Public kitchens for soup for the working people.

The most effective way of killing the Jews was the shortage of Food. Eventually these people were skin and bones, they called Them the muselmen. They looked like death and they were almost Death. It should be noted that these people came from rich and Comfortable, nice spacious homes into these dilapidated rooms, but We had no choice; we had to accept what was available.

Before the ghetto was closed the Poles would return to there Apartments to extort money from the Jews, ask them for rent. And If the Jews refused, they would return at night and beat them up, They were angry because they were forced out of their dwellings. On May 3, 1940 the ghetto was officially closed, and nobody was Able to leave the ghetto except if they had a special permission. This the Gestapo did in order that the businesses like banks and Other big establishments should be turned over to them in perfect Condition.

As of May 10, 1940 if any Jew dared to leave the ghetto, or even Stand too close to the fence, there were no questions asked, the SS just shot them without any warning. So the ghetto became a Fact. After the ghetto was officially closed, there were about 165,000 Jews in this small, poorest, oldest part of the city of Lodz called Baluty.

Zgierska, Limanowskiego, Drewnoska and the Baluter Ring, had 3 Gates, where Jews were allowed to cross from one side of the Ghetto to the other. The center of Zgierska Street did not belong To the ghetto, and that is where the streetcars went. And that is Where the Poles used to spit at us from the streetcar and call us Names all sorts of ugly names.

Eventually they built three bridges to cross the street, so we Would not contaminate the part that did not belong to the ghetto.

Most people came to the ghetto in the beginning of January 1940.

The first part of 1940 in the ghetto was relatively calm. The Question was how would the ghetto support itself?

The Jews in the ghetto were not allowed on the street between the Hours of 7:00-5:00PM, however, eventually they changed the hours, Allowing them to be on the street from 7:00AM to 8:00PM.

Before they closed the ghetto, the Volks-Deutsche were allowed to Enter any Jewish house, rob them and beat them up, that was a Daily occurrence. The truth is that at first the Jewish people did Not realize what was happening, and eventually (just like in the Jewish ghetto song), they played cards, chess, they gathered in The street, courtyards discussing all sorts of things. Before the Ghetto was officially closed; Poles were smuggling food in.

And because there was a shortage of food people were paying any

Amount of money in order to get something to eat.

The ghetto worked for the Vermacht and for private German people. Everybody had to work, because only if you worked and had an Identity card was you entitled to get food. Food if you could Call it food; this was not even fit for a dog.

So between hunger and freezing weather, there was an epidemic, After all the sanitary conditions were far to be desired, and that Caused people to get sick, therefore the death rate was rampart. The grave diggers could not accommodate to burry the death and They would just lie there until there was their next.

In 1940 the Haupttreuhandstelle Ost (H.T.O.) confiscated every Jewish business and every Jewish home with it's belonging, this was done together with the "Kripo",

There was no house in the ghetto that did not have sick people. People were tired, they were loosing strength, and their legs could

Not keep up their bodies. Their legs were swollen, they looked Like piano legs. Eventually their entire body would fill up with Water, and it was impossible for them to carry on.

They could not get medication; they were preying for the VIGANTOL The vitamin everybody dreamed off. People were wondering of whom Will survive to tell the world of our sufferings, of the

Unimaginable miserable life in the Lodzer Ghetto.

In 1941 Bibow gave a decree that the ghetto must reduce it's Inhabitants, naturally that meant deportation. So Bibow deported the first Jews to Chelmno to be killed there. This went on all the Time, they deported lots of Jews and then they would bring into The ghetto, Jews from other countries or cities. For the Germans The ghettos were not only a source of slave labor, but also Laboratory where new methods of killing people without resorting To evident genocide were developed. And because of that, death Came to these people as a result of starvation, lack of medical Help, harassment, oppression and dehumanization. In the second Part of 1941 they started to send Jews from the neighboring cities Into the Lodzer Ghetto at least 8000, and another 3082 from the Northern part of Poland that was how they liquidated other cities Of Jews. They made them Juden rein.

This strategic plan how to kill all the Jews of Poland and other Countries were a fact. In September of 1941 they brought in a Transport of 20,000 German Jews. In October of 1941, came to Lodz a transport of Jews from Austria, Chechoslovakia, Luxemburg and Others. According to the mayor of Litzmannstadt Ventzki there were 60,000 Jews living in the Ghetto to one square mile, in other Words 6 people to one room. And that was when they decided to sent A large number of Jews to be killed in their death factories.

Don't forget that their original plan in 1939 was to liquidate the Jews of Lodz and send them to G.G. which meant to General Government, either Krakow or Warsaw which was approved by Goering and Himmler. For some reason or other this really never materialized, for they formed a ghetto in Lodz which was officially closed on May 1, 1940. The most common way of getting rid of the Jews was to give them as little as food as possible, this system worked for them very well, it brought all sorts of epidemics, and people were dying like flies. In June of 1941 Himmler came to Lodz and paid a visit to the ghetto, naturally after his visit there was new trouble. They said that there were some shots fired in the ghetto, they could not find the sniper. So they took 25 Jews for lashing (flogging) and they were using iron rods. I really do not remember whether they survived this ordeal. When the Jews from Vienna, Germany and Czechoslovakia arrived in the on September 1941, they were put up in schools, they were given drinks and meals. These people did not know what happened, why they landed up in the Lodzer ghetto. It took a long time until they got assigned to some rooms. This inhuman ghetto condition caused people to search through all sorts of waist baskets, through garbage disposals, looking for food. I myself met my big brother's friend doing this and was very embarrassed to see him there. Times were so bad that the potato peels were only given to

People who would provide a prescription from the doctor. People had

No strength to work to walk, their feet and faces were all Swollen, others looked like death themselves, we called them the "Klapsedra" which really stood for the announcements for people's Funerals. You would see these people lying on the street, they Looked like skeletons. It was an impossible sight, this was a plague and degradation of the Jews in the Lodzer Ghetto. I want You to know that the ghetto had it's own court, it's own prison, And the Jewish police enforced their laws. The Jewish Court had a Lot of cases, if you took something home by mistake from the Resort and they caught you, then they would send you to court and You would be sentenced; they would put you in jail.

I was a witness for our office, because this person held on to a Card of a deceased relative. He was a sick and hungry person he Needed more food. The first time I went to court the defended did Not show up he was sick. The second time I went to court the judge Said: "The defendant was judged by a higher court, he died", Therefore the case is dismissed. It is difficult to describe the Conditions of our life in the ghetto, because nobody would believe Us. People were loosing their believe in G-d, they stopped Praying, and those that did pray their prayers were for a quick End to their miserable lives, they wished to end their lives, they Had no strength to go on this way. The future did not bring any

Relief, and they did not know where to turn for help. Every day
Seemed to be worse than the one before, how hopeless life became
In this ghetto? Was there nobody in this world willing to help us?
It surely was difficult to be a believing Jew, you could not help
Asking G-d why He did not help us, why we were punished so
Severely, and would it all end? We were hungry and our nerves were
Shattered.

The Nazis knew very well how to finish us without too much effort
On their part. They did not have to use any guns to kill us, these
Conditions in the ghetto were such that they did this job for
Them. It is hard to believe that the nation which gave the world
Goethe, Schiller, Beethoven, Bach, would finally come to it's
Senses, and leave the Nazi Machine.

I still remember how they took us to Lutomierska Platz and made us
Watch the hanging of a few Jews, because they took a piece of
Leather or material from the factory where they work. It was
during

The height of the winter and we were forced to stand there for
Hours and watch this terrible picture, everybody was crying.

The other thing that comes to my mind is the Rumkowski's famous
Speech during the Sperre in September of 1942: "A grievous blow
Struck the ghetto, I am asking the Jewish mothers to give up there
Children, their sick, their old". Most people were not willing to
Do it, the children were torn away from them, and very often

The mothers went with their children.

Many families committed suicide; they would rather die with there Children than give them up. One of these families was a coworker From my office. He and his wife put on the gas and were going to Die together with their child. The neighbors smelled gas and Forced their door open. When they got into the room the child was Already dead from the gas fumes, but the parent were still Bereaving. The neighbors revived the parents against their will, But their life was shot. You can imagine what their life was like. I never met them after the war, but I am convinced that they too Were killed in Auschwitz like the rest of the Lodzer Jews.

There were, however, some people who were so hungry that the sight Of a whole bread and honey appealed to them, they had no control Over their hunger. They volunteered to join the deportation.

We in the ghetto did not know about the extermination of Jews by Adolf Eichman and Reinhardt Heydrich-Am Wannsee in 1942. Because If we did none of us would have listened to their lies, we would Have rather died in the ghetto than in Auchwitz or Birkenau. How We were able to put up with these conditions and survive till the End of August 1944 is really a miracle. I wrote many articles, About this, this is only a short overview of the ghetto, because It would take thousands of pages to tell the truth about life in

The Lodzer Ghetto. And it is not only to tell, but I feel that it would too difficult for people to read about these atrocities which nobody in their right mind can imagine.

The final liquidation of the ghetto started on June 23, 1944. Bibow fooled the people, he deceived us, and we believed him. To reassure the people that they are going deep into Germany, he told them that they can even take their pots and pants with them. Little did our Jewish people know that this was only a "bait", to get them to leave the ghetto. This was their last "Roll Call", I should rather say our last march to death. This is how they deceived us all the time, and we believed their lies all the time. But how were we to learn the truth?

And that was the end of the Jewish Lodz and their Lodzer Jews, which will never exist again. Gone are their Rabbis, gone are their authors, gone are their painters, gone are their composers, gone are their pianists, gone are their teachers. Gone are their mothers, their fathers, grandfathers, uncles' aunts, and most all gone are their beautiful children that never had a chance.

Sometime in the 1980 the Poles built a memorial on Marysin to the children of Lodz, and it reads: "They took your life and we are giving you the Iron Cross". No place does it say that these were Jewish children. None of the Polish children were killed, they

Are simply trying to rewrite history, they are trying to erase Jews from the globe of this world. Just like they did with the Jewish cemeteries, even there they do not let them rest in peace. There rumors in the ghetto, that the Germans were using the blood of the Jewish children for transfusions to their wounded soldiers.

REGINKA

After a short time when we came to the ghetto, my sister Reginka would suddenly disappear for a few hours every day. My parents were very worried because she was the youngest in the family, and to them she was still their baby.

None of us knew where she went, until one day she came home with a little note for my brother Lajzer, and that was when she told us why she disappeared all these days.

As told by my sister Reginka:

Every day she went to Platz Koscielny where Rumkowski the president of the ghetto had his Headquarters, with the idea that she would be able to speak with him.

The Jewish police surrounded Rumkowski, and she could never get to speak with him. Reginka did not give up, she went there every day, until one day Rumkowski was sitting on his dorozka and he saw how the Jewish police was pushing this little girl away from the dorozka.

He asked the police to leave her alone, and motioned to her to join him in the dorozka. Rumkowski asked her what she wanted, and she told him that her family was thrown out of the apartment and they had no money for food. She told him that she has an older brother for whom she needs a job to help her family.

Rumkowski was so impressed with this little girl, with her perseverance, that he gave a note which was a permission to let her and her brother to come the following day to see him.

Reginka came home with this note showed it to my big brother, he laughed at it. He thought it was a joke, that they gave her this note just to get rid of her. Lajzer this tall six- foot brother, should go with this little girl to see Rumkowski, he was not willing and embarrassed to go. Reginka begged him to go with her, my parents intervened, they told him to try, that he had nothing to loose, maybe he will be lucky and might get a job.

Well we finally convinced my brother to give in, and the following day the two of them went to see Rumkowski.

When they got to Rumkowsi's Headquarters, Reginka showed the police the piece of paper Rumkowski gave her, and the police let them both in. My brother could not believe his eyes, normally the police did not let anybody near Rumkowski.

He was amazed that they went from one office to another and all the doors were open for them, all Reginka did is show them the little piece of paper.

Finally they were lead into Rumkowski's office, Reginka introduced my brother to him. Rumkowski asked my brother for his name and asked him whether he was related to Michael Flatto. My brother told him that this was our father's uncle, who

was the brother of our grandfather. Rumkowski was very impressed, because Michal Flatto was a well-known philanthropist and very active in the member of the Mizrachi movement in the city of Lodz.

Oh! He said, if that's the case, because you are a grand nephew of Michal Flatto I am going to give you a good job, you will be working in a pharmacy.

Rumkowski told my bother how impressed he was with Reginka, he could not get over the fact, how she would not give up, until he would finally stop to listen to her. My brother thanked Rumkowski for giving him employment, which we needed so badly.

When the two of them returned home they showed us the order for his employment, which was a dream, a miracle sent from heaven. Everybody wanted to work; everybody needed money for food, however for that you needed protekcja to get to the right person in order to get any job. And here this little girl who did not know anybody, got right to the top, and secured such a wonderful job for her big brother.

This was Reginka's first accomplishment, she did not give up, and she continued her mission. Every day she would go again to Platz Koscielny to see Rumkowski again. Until she secured jobs for my younger brother, my mother, my father and me.

And finally she tried to get a job for herself. Rumkowski asked her what do you want to do? You are so young, why do you want to work? So she told him that she

wants to help her family. Her answer impressed him that he said if you were so courage's and so smart I would make you my messenger.

And that is exactly what happened, Reginka became Chaim Rumkowski's messenger. She got to know all the important top people in the ghetto, and that helped us a lot.

This little spoiled girl, who was the baby in our family suddenly assumed the responsibility for the whole family. I cannot innumerate all the things she did to save our lives in the ghetto. She was the angel sent from heaven to take care of our family and friends. Without her we would have been lost and most probably deported in the early years of the ghetto like the rest of the ghetto population.

Everybody knew the RUDA REGINKA (red) in fact most people thought that she was one of the girls from his orphanage, and that was why he made her his messenger. Many books have been written about the ghetto but nobody felt it important to write about my dear and wonderful sister who was the messenger First for Rumkowki and then for "Pani Jozefowa Rumkowska" and Freulein Fuchs.

Reginka was an unusual child, very bright and very intelligent, and I must add that she was quiet pretty. She had something that commanded respect, when she opened her mouth you had to listen to what she had to say. Even Bibow listen to her

when she needed medication for my father, even Freulein Greiser in Auschwitz listen to her, and after listening to her was willing to give a job in Auschwitz.

I always felt that Reginka was born with a silver spoon, because whatever Reginka did was always the right thing. She would often complain in the ghetto that when she asked us for advice, it was never the right one; she would always say that when she listens to herself she comes out ahead. I don't know why but I have feeling that G-d gave her special wisdom to handle life much better than we did.

There were so many terrible things in the ghetto that happened to us, so many serious illnesses, and she was always there for us, she would always get the best doctors come to the house which was not heard of in the ghetto. Everybody knew how important Dr. Miller was; Reginka would get the O.K. from Bibow to have doctor Miller to see my father.

In the end all this did not help us. My beloved father died of starvation; he refused to eat non-kosher food. My dear mother was killed in Auschwitz, so was my big brother. My little brother was killed on the death march in Germany in the last days of April 1945. And my little angel Reginka was killed from the bombs in Germany on the railroad station near Potsdam on April 20, 1945.

Who would believe that she would not survive this terrible war, she was always so lucky, whatever she touched went her way, she was the one that was born with a silver spoon, so what happened in the end?

I surely do not understand how come that she died and I survived, I sat right next to her in these cattle train, how is this possible, I guess I will never understand G-D's way and will have to live with it for the rest of my life. There is nobody in this world that deserved to survive and have a good life than my beloved sister Reginka

DYSENTERY

The epidemic of dysentery killed an enormous amount of people in the ghetto. I remember that the first person to take sick in our house was my father. Poor father was a very thin person who could not afford to loose any weight. His illness was very contagious and soon, my poor mother came down with dysentery too.

Before we turned around, everybody in our house was sick with dysentery, except me. I was the only one left to take care of them. I, who had never done anything, who never knew how to scrub floors, how to wash clothing, how to cook. I had to assume these obligations all at once.

To this day I don't know, and don't understand how a person can grow up over night, and become an instant adult, even though this is exactly what happened to me.

It is almost impossible to describe this deadly disease. My parents were running very high fevers. They were lying there listless, as if they were close to death. They were losing weight all the time, from their already thin emaciated bodies. They were

practically skin and bones, there was nothing left of them. Just to look at my parents, my sister, and my brothers, was a frightful experience. Their vomit was filled with blood. I did not know where to be first. But G-D was with me, and He showed me the way. Somehow, I managed to cope with this terrible situation.

The doctor was summoned and we were very lucky that he was willing to come. He was a friend of my family as he was my father's doctor before the war. He loved my father and because of his relationship with my father, he agreed to come to help. His name was Doctor Rakowski.

When he came, his first question was: "Who takes care of the sick and who takes care of the house?" He could not get over how clean our single room home was. My mother who was so sick, pointed to me with great pride. The doctor could not believe how I, a young girl, had managed this terrible situation.

Our house looked like a hospital, every possible space was taken over by the sick. I had little experience in cleaning and found it very difficult. Of course, I had no experience in nursing. But, G-D was very kind to me. The room that was assigned to us in the ghetto had no running water, nor did we have a toilet. So you can imagine how difficult this was for me, for dysentery needs the toilet more than anything else.

It is almost impossible to describe this illness, all I can say that is that the person stricken with dysentery feels dehumanized. They are completely helpless, due to their loss of blood, after a day or two all their energy was gone. And eventually the loss of weight made them look as if they were dying, and that was very frightening for me.

When my family finally got over their illness, they were all very weak. They had lost a lot of weight, and it took a very long time for them to regain their strength. So, this was my first experience with sickness, and I was extremely happy when my dear mother was able to take over her responsibilities again.

The only winner after this epidemic was my dear father. He got rid of his "Dermen Katar", in Polish Katar Kiszek, like a constant diarrhea, a constant disorder of the intestines. No doctor before the war had been able to cure my father of this condition. Somehow, miraculously, this awful condition was somehow reversed and for this, we were very grateful.

I often think back of how I was able to keep the house clean, how I used Lizol to clean the floor and the bucket, which served as our lavatory. Imagine, carrying this bucket three flights of steps to empty it, cleaning it, making sure that it was free of

bacteria, so that this horrible illness would not spread again. Dysentery was and is a deadly disease.

It took quite a while before everything returned to normal, my mother was very weak. She had lost a lot of weight and it took forever for her to regain her strength and energy.

But this was only the beginning. Nobody could imagine or picture the horrible future that followed. My mother took over the household, and she was our wonderful a mother again. She kept us together and tried her best, so that our home should be a home in spite of all the troubles and circumstances. She cooked, and cleaned, and did everything possible to help us.

Her sister, brothers, nieces, nephews, sisters-in-law, friends, and everybody who needed a helping hand, knew that they could count on her.

This she did in her ever constant quiet way, without recognition, without anybody knowing about it. She was very humble when it came to these things, and she did not like anybody knowing about her good deeds. Yes, this was my mother. Nothing was too difficult for her and everything was done with love and a smile. We never heard her complain about these terrible times.

My mother who was the daughter of very rich parents. Who had grown up with sleep-in-maids, who had never had to clean a floor, that never cleaned a toilet, assumed her obligations at once. She did the same for others in secret without revealing it to anybody. There was nothing and nobody in her way and she was not afraid of anything and anybody. She was only afraid of G-D. And all this happened at the beginning of the ghetto.

None of us had an idea of what was to follow, for none of us had ever witnessed such horrible times as we were chosen to live in.

Bnei-Akiba

My oldest brother Eliezer Zvi Flatto was a member of the Bnei-Akiba in Lodz Poland. He was an active and a very dedicated Zionist, which was not according to my Father's wishes. Our Father was a Gerer Chasid and he was an active member of the Agudath Israel organization in Lodz. Therefore he would have preferred that my brother Eliezer follow his foot steps.

The fact that my brother was different caused a lot of friction in our house. It is true that my father's uncle Michal Flatto was one of the founders of Mizrachi in Lodz, but that did not help my brother at all.

So my brother Eliezer broke the ice and paved the way for all of us, he certainly instilled the love for Eretz Israel in all of us, we listened to his stories, we listened to his songs. In fact, in addition to my father beloved zmiroth, we would sing all the Hebrew songs my brother learned at the Bnei-Akiba, and that became a custom in our house.

Since I heard so much about Bnei-Akiba from Eliezer, I was very anxious to see this place, and after pestering him he finally agreed to take me there. I was very young they put me into the youngest group, which they called the kwuca. There were kwutzot for girls and separate kwutzot for boys, even amongst the young kids. A gdud was a combination of both or many kwutzot.

I came to Bnei-Akiba on a Shabath afternoon, and was given a kwutza leader whose name was Karola Iserowska. After the group's meeting, they annouced that we are going to have an Oneg-Shabath. This was the most impressive experience for me, it was getting dark we formed a circle and sat around, and suddenly I heared this sweet and most beautiful voice sing: "Chinei matov uma nai, shevet achim gam yachat, after which everybody joined in. I sat there as if I was hypnotized, this voice went right through me, and even though, I had very little knowledge of Hebrew at that time, this voice made me understand the meaning of the song she was singing. I was transformed into one of them, feeling just as they did, I became part of this group, as if I was an old member of this group.

This first Oneg-Shabath was a magnet for me, and from that time on I insisted that my brother take me with him to Bnei_Akiba. As I was getting older my love for Bnei-Akiba grew more and more each day, and I first began to understand what their aim was and how they were trying to accomplish it.

When I got older and was able to go to the Bnei-Akiba on my own, I began to attend the groups religiously. These meetings and lectures were very important and interesting for me. I learned in detail about the beginning of Zionist movement, about Jewish history from a different angle, not the way they thought us in public school, or in the afternoon Beis-Yaakov.

These lectures were given by people who loved Eretz-Israel, they were given by members of Bnei-Akiba whose only wish was to have an Eretz-Israel. All the Jews regardless of their beliefs wished for Jerusalem. These members dedicated their lives to spread the love for Israel, and they did this with all their heart and soul. And look what their results were? From a handful of young idealist whom I did not know except, except those that were known to me like Sara Stern, Henia Hyman, Karola Iserowska, Salek Kuper, Yechoshua Markowitz and a few others.

Bnei-Akiba grew to be a large organization well known in Lodz. Eventually they even had their own Cchachshara in Slavkow which was called kibbutz Ovadia. This could have never happened if these leaders were not teaching the youth the right things, my contemporaries and I have learned so much there, that we felt as if we were one family.

Even today after fifty years plus, have passed by, I still feel that they are members of my family. Bnei-Akiba was my second home, I run there with enthusiasm, to attend the groups, to write articles for the newspaper (of course on my age level only), to do research about Zionism, to give a book report, all these I did and learned to do at Bnei-Akiba. I would like to mention that after being thought by my beloved parents all the morals and ethics, Bnei -Akiba was an additional place where I learned brotherly

love, kindness, to be truthful, and above all to love Eretz-Israel.

As I was growing older they thought us Pirke-Avoth, they even thought us the signs of scouting in Hebrew, as well as "Musta". I remember that on Lag-be -Omer we would go hiking and collect money for Keren Kayemet. We not only learned spiritual things about life, but they also thought us how to have fun and be happy. So you see Bnei-Akiba was not just a social place where you went to spend some time. Bnei-Akiba was dedicated to teach the Jewish youth about religion about our beloved Eretz-Israel. The youngsters that came to Bnei-Akiba were a special breed, they came to this organization which was a crystal well without a bottom, filled with the most important tenants a righteous human being should have. And for that I am forever thankful to them. Going to school was a normal compulsory part of life for every child in Lodz and all over Europe, however, going to Bnei-Akiba was an act of choice, nobody forced us to go there. We went there because we loved to go there, we loved our leaders, we loved the members. Here we learned about our heritage. Most of the members came from Orthodox homes, so there was no need to teach us religion, however, they did teach us about the early Zionism, about the Haskalah, and their different leaders. Bnei-Akiba was not a place where one came to gossip, and spend an afternoon. Bnei-Akiba was

a productive place where Jewish youth was busy studying not only love for Israel but also the love for every Jew.

My beloved brother Eliezer Flatto was so determined to go to Israel that in spite of the aggravation he caused my parents, at the age of seventeen he ran away to the Bnei-Akiba kibbutz in Slavkowitz. He kept on writing letters to my parents trying to explain to them why he left our house, and how much he wanted to go to Israel to live there. His stay in the kibbutz would entitle him to an affidavit. I still remember the exchange of long letters between my father and my brother. He even tried to set up an appointment with this famous Rabbi who visited the Kibbutz to convince my father that he is not doing anything wrong and that he is the same religious fellow he was at home. Unfortunately this meeting never took place. After eight or ten months Eliezer returned home which was only a year before the war broke out. He still kept on going to Bnei-Akiba just like he did before. Unfortunately Eliezer did not survive this terrible war, he was with us in the Lodz Ghetto until August 24, 1944. He was not fortunate enough to see this miracle, to see for himself that we finally have a country of our own, our beloved Israel. Nobody really knows how much he loved Israel and how much he wished to go there legally or illegally, but he did not want to break my parents' heart who would only let him go on aliyah alone. His respect and love for our parents did not help him anyway. Our

father died in the ghetto in 1943, our mother was killed in Auschwitz in 1944, our brother Chaim was killed at the end of April 1945 on the famous marches, and our dear sister Reginka was killed from a bomb in the trains on April 20, 1945, and I was left alone to tell this story of my family and the wonderful Bnei-Akiba of Lodz. The story of the Lodzer ghetto, Auschwitz, Bergen Belsen, Elsnig/Elbe and the end of this terrible World War Two. I would like to conclude that every member of Bnei-Akiba was like hand picked, each and every one added something to the existence of this great organization, and this should be noted for the sake of the past as well as the future. Many a youth today could learn from us, as far as mitzwoth are concern, as far as dedication is concerned, as far as love and understanding for each other is concerned. We did not need psychologists or psychiatrists, we had the most wonderful parents and most wonderful friends at Bnei-Akiba. We were all like one large family, a very happy and satisfied group that many people envied.

ELIEZER ZVI FLATTO

I was asked by Bnei-Akiba to write about my oldest brother, who was a dedicated member of Bnei-Akiba for many years. Naturally, I am very prejudiced when it comes to my family, but I will try very hard to be objective. Eliezer, was also known by his Jewish name, Lajser. He was a very handsome young man, and so too was his Neshama as he was honest and pure. He was truly beautiful inside out and anyone who knew him, who miraculously survived the war, would attest to this.

Specifically, my brother's friends, Noach Herbst and Josio Checinski, who is now known as Josio Chen.

This article is to tell you about my brother's life in the ghetto. At the end of February 1940, Eliezer entered the ghetto with our entire family. Right from the beginning of the war, Eliezer assumed the responsibility of our family. He made sure that our father was able to stay at home and was not exposed to the SS. He even took over all the financial responsibilities which were usually handled by my father and mother. I must admit that despite the fact that Eliezer had no previous experience in these matters, his performance was superb. All this came to an end when the ghetto was about to be closed.

Our wonderful Reginka, who was the baby in the family, got him a

job in a pharmacy, (through Rumkowski). Eliezer adjusted very well to his new job, and his boss could not believe how quickly he learned the trade, and how dedicated he was to his job.

Because of cramped quarters, and the severe winter in 1940, terrible epidemics broke out in the ghetto. People could not adjust to this type of living. People were losing their strength and they were getting weaker every day. They would constantly come into the pharmacy asking for help, for they were fainting all the time from malnutrition, hunger and sickness. They hoped that there might be some medication that could help them. Eliezer used to give them sugar or share his lunch with them, even though he himself was very hungry. He understood that it was hunger and cold that made them feel so terribly ill, and that food was the best medicine for hungry people.

Before we went into the ghetto, Eliezer volunteered to go to our grandfather who was deported to the East, to Izbica. The purpose of this trip was to deliver to our grandfather, money, jewelry and bedding, because they did not let our grandfather take anything with him. My grandfather was lucky that the Nazis did not kill him immediately but rather, deported him to Izbica.

Eliezer's mission to help our grandfather was accomplished, wever, his return trip to Lodz was another story. He smuggled all the way, but when he got to Bzeziny which is a suburb of Lodz, his

trouble began. The SS caught him, interrogated him, beat him up without any mercy. And then they told him to say that his name is Rosenfeld and that he wanted this war.

This was one of their games in order to torture the Jews. Finally, after he practically could not stand up straight, they released him.

How he was able to get home from Bzeziny to Lodz is a miracle. He looked terrible when he came home. It took a few weeks to get rid of all of his bruises but, thank G-d, the Nazis had not broken any of his bones.

Eliezer had a heart of gold. He was forever trying to help people. maybe because he was so tall, he was fearless and nothing was too hard for him. He surely took after both of our parents, for they were very brave and giving people too. And so, life was going forward with it's terrible daily chores, and it seemed as if our "Tzaross" would never end....

Let me describe our apartment in the Lodz ghetto, or rather, I should say our room, for all we had was one room, which we divided with a wardrobe. On one side were two beds, in the middle stood a table and chairs, and on the left side near the window was a library cabinet, the only tangible thing we saved from our apartment in the city.

This cabinet held my father's sets of gemaras and Shas, my

father's holy books, which were his treasures.

In the back, was the kitchen, which consisted of a coal stove made out of white tiles. There was also a small work table and a bench on which we kept two pails of water. Opposite this bench was a cabinet for the storage of coal. So this one room was our living room, our bedroom, our dining room, and kitchen all in one. At night, you could see wall to wall beds. We were actually very lucky, because other people had even smaller rooms for our size family. We were fortunate to get this room in the building that belonged to our grandfather. We had protekcja. Most people did not get a room as quickly as we had and so, this was a great accomplishment. The first winter was not too bad in the ghetto. The ghetto was not truly sealed as this was still 1940. We were still able to get coal, or crockery and so our room was warm. The following winter was when the problems started. We had no coal and we tried to salvage wood in for the stove to warm up the room. The winters were very brutally cold. My brother took apart one of the wooden warehouses and split up the wood with Tante Sonia, my mother's sister, and their cousin Sara. 1941 was a very severe winter and because there was no coal, and little wood, this caused everybody to get sick. The walls were covered with ice and there was always a thick layer of frost on the windows. The drinking water in our pails turned into ice, and of course

there was no food.

We stayed in bed and covered ourselves with these thin covers, for the goodones we had sent ahead to Warsaw, where we were supposed to have gone.

Whenever we were able, we stayed in bed as it was impossible to sit in the room under these conditions. It was like being in an icebox, and it was easy to become frost bitten. We did not know what to do and yet, we tried very hard to keep up our moral, which was not easy under the circumstances.

In 1941, Eliezer became sick with the flu. He was hungry and losing weight, and we had no food to give him. Our room was as cold as an ice box. We had no heat, no coal, and no wood. The three walls of our room were covered with heavy layers of ice. Eliezer continued to get worse, and eventually, developed TB. We were desperate as we knew what this meant for such a young person. The medication and food needed for this particular illness was not available to us. We tried very hard to do whatever was in our power to help our dear brother.

The things I witnessed as a result of Eliezer's terrible illness, are too gruesome to describe. It is truly too morbid for any human being.

Because of our wonderful sister, Reginka, who was the messenger to Rumkowski my brother was accepted to the TB hospital on Wesola, where he spen many months.

When he returned home, he was under Dr. Ginsberg's care who really saved his life. Eventually, my dear sister Reginka, got him a room and a job on Marysin, where the air was cleaner and where working conditions were nicer too.

Eliezer kept up with his friends all throughout the ghetto. His best friend, Noach Herbst, and Mera Berman were frequent guests in our house as were others, whose names, I no longer recall. Because he was very handsome, he was very popular with girls. His morals and ethics as well as his sincerity were appreciated by all his friends. I have been told by many of his friends, that they only had one real friend in their entire life time, and that was Eliezer.

Eliezer was saved from his terrible illness, but he was not saved, from the ovens of Auschwitz.

To prove his high morals, I would like to share with you just one single event. In August of 1944, we all came to Eliezer's small room on Marysin, and we tried to hide, so we could avoid the deportation. Mr. Schneider, who was the director of the place where Eliezer worked, had a bunker built under the Holtzwohlle factory. He offered my brother a place to hide, but my brother would not take advantage of it, because we were five people, too many people for that small bunker. For at least two weeks we hid in many different buildings on Marysin and this is a story within

itself. Another person would have gone to Mr. Schneider and demanded that he hide his family. Another person would have threatened Mr. Schnedier. But not my brother Eliezer. He could never have behaved like that. He was Lajser Flatto and his nature would not allow him to blackmail Mr. Schneider, even where life was concerned.

My brother did manage to save one couple's lives. Mr. and Mrs. Groch lived in the room right near Eliezer's in Marysin. Mr. Groch worked at the train station, from which the Jews were deported. He asked my brother to write down on a piece of paper the name of the final destination. As we were being deported, we truly had no idea to where the Germans were taking us. My brother arranged with Mr. Groch that he would hide a piece of paper between the cracks of the boards in The train cars with name of our destination. My brother, always true to his word, wrote down that we had been taken to Auschwitz. To us, this did not mean very much at the time, as we had no idea that this was synonymous with death.

But, Mr. Groch, who worked at the train transport, understood what this word meant. He managed to remain in the ghetto, as part of the 850 Jews whose job was to clean the Lodz ghetto, rather than go to Auschwitz. He told me this, after the war, when I returned to Lodz. He told me that he owed his life, and the life of his wife, to Eliezer. After two weeks of hiding all over Marisin,

and our stay at the Methal-Betrieb, where Mr. Chimowicz sold us out to Bibow, we left Marysin and the ghetto Lodz on August 24, 1944, and arrived in Auschwitz, on August 30th, 1944. This was the longest journey to death. After a short stay in Auschwitz, Eliezer (Lajser) Flatto was killed there and cremated, as was my beloved mother and the rest of our holy and innocent Jews.

Lajser and his illness:

Lajser spent many months in the hospital and since it was a hospital for contagious diseases, we were not allowed inside the hospital. In the beginning we could only speak to him outside of the fence, while he was sat by one of the windows on the first floor. And this is how we visited with Lajser for many months until he was allowed to walk around, and we could speak with him through narrow cracks in the wooden fences.

Nothing was too hard for us as long as we knew that our brother was getting better. Everybody in our family used to go to see him when ever they had a spare minute. We were a very close family. Our love for one another was something quite unusual. Nothing came between us not sickness or hunger. All we knew was that we were one and that was what kept us together, and let us overcome all these terrible obstacles.

Eventually, Lajser was lucky, for he was partially cured and was discharged from the hospital. And so, he came home. Our happiness

was so great that we felt like we were in seventh heaven. He had to be under doctor's care and he had to undergo treatment for his lungs, which was called Odma. That meant that they would collapse the sick part of the lung. After a year of Odma, Lajser was like a new person.

Doctor Ginsberg saved his life. While going to the doctor for his treatments, Lajser still had to report to work. People who did not work in the ghetto were subject for deportation. Nobody wanted to be separated from their family, especially those in our family. My dear sister, Reginka, together with my mother, got him a temporary job in a bakery. This was truly a dream come true, almost as if you were at a resort hotel. This job lasted for only three months and then the privilege of having food, was passed along to someone else in the ghetto. The job consisted of some office work. Also, Eliezer had to constantly check the inventory, and make sure that nothing was stolen from the bakery. It was an easy job as you could eat as much bread as you wanted on the premises and you were allowed one loaf of bread to take home for your family. What a great bonus this was for us hungry people! However, all this lasted for only three months, after which somebody else would take over.

In the meantime my sister found him a very small room on Marisin where the air was much better and she also found him a job in the

up a few steps. The room was inside the courtyard, the first entrance on the right. There were two windows, of which one faced the outhouse. What a "view"! Anyhow, at least it was in the middle and none of the walls were exposed like the ones on Zgierska. There was a very long dark corridor but there were no lights in it. On each side there were other tenants, but each family had only one room. Three weeks before we moved I had a frightening dream, which I was afraid to share with anybody. I dreamed of a huge black wagon that had come to move my father's body. I was petrified as there was no reason for me to think that my father was going to die. At the time, he was not that sick. I did not know how to hide my fear.

I had once before had a similar dream soon before my dear grandmother died, so I had to live with my fears all by myself. In the meantime, Doctor Yokish-Greenberg kept on trying to convince my father to give in and start eating meat. She tried to scare him telling him that if he would not eat the meat he would not survive. She reminded him that because of his love for his wife and children, he should eat, rather than allow himself to get weaker and die.

But, my father was a very pious and G-D fearing man, and he refused to eat the unkosher meat. He finally agreed that if we could get him some chicken, he would eat. Again, our beautiful Reginka got hold of a quarter of a chicken and brought it home for

him. My mother boiled fresh chicken soup, and I was elected to give it to him. I poured the soup into a soup bowl and brought to my father. Then, he asked me to put the soup into a cup instead, so he would not have to see the unkosher food.

I did as he asked of me. However, when I brought the cup to him, he said in Jewish: "Es loint shon nisht mer", (it doesn't pay anymore), and he refused to eat it. I begged him to eat it, but nothing helped. He refused. Lajser landed up eating the soup and the quarter of chicken, which he too needed because he was still so weak.

My father's statement made a terrible impression on me. I realized that he had given up and I became even more afraid of the future. The next week, the black wagon that I had dreamed of, arrived to move our belongings. It also moved my weak and ill father to our new quarters. We were all very happy that at last we would not have to freeze anymore. It was only December and the winters in Lodz lasted all the way into the beginning of April.

During these three weeks in our new location, I slept right next to my father's bed. Many of these nights, I did not even undress, but stayed in my clothing. This I did so that if my father should need me I should be right there. My poor mother was exhausted as well as weak and hungry, but she took excellent care of my father. During the day she too had to go to work, like all of us even

though she sometimes managed to work part time. Suddenly, my father complained of his throat, that he could not

swallow and when I looked into his throat, it was all white and full of pimples.

We called a specialist, Dr. Mazur who came to the house. My brother, Chaim and I

were there while the rest of the family must have been at work. Dr. Mazur

examined my father, and did not say anything, and before I could question him, he left. I ran after him, begging him to tell me what was wrong with my father.

He turned around and said: "Can't you see, you have a dying man there. What do you want me to do"? What a cold blooded doctor! He was so callous to speak this way to me, as I was so young. I know that he could have been more gentle. I felt like fainting. My feet buckled under me. What was I to do? How could I deliver this news to my little brother, and the rest of my family? One thing I knew for sure. I knew that I must return to our house. Otherwise, my father would realize that things were bad. I do not know, where I got the strength to enter the room and act as if there was nothing to worry about. I acted as if my father would recover in a short time. There was no other way for me but to play this game, so with all the energy that was left in me, I went over to my father's bed, and kissed him and said: "Don't worry. You will get better like you did before, when you were sick in the past."

Unfortunately my father passed away that very evening. I wrote about this terrible night already, so I am not going to repeat same.

My brother Lajzer tried very hard to keep the family together, he took over my Father's job. I can still remember how hard he tried to make our Passover Sedar as normal as possible. Mother tried to prepare from the little food we had some sorts of goodies, and borsht was our wine for kiddush. We all missed our father, and tried hard not to cry, even though we were all choked up, including our wonderful and brave mother. We all could see how she tried to make us happy, even though she missed her beloved husband so much. The next holiday was Shavuoth and again my mother and Lajser tried hard to keep our spirits up. I can still remember how he brought leaves to put around the room, like we used to do before the war. Then my mother went with us to the secret Shul on Bzezinska to say Yizkor.

How difficult this must have been for her, with all these young children, and she, such a young widow. And that is how we kept together, thanking G-d for every day, that he did not separate us, like other families were. There is one last story I would like to tell that happened during the time my brother, Lajser was hospitalized with TB. With the stay in the hospital, came other problems.

The SS used to deport the terminally ill people and sometimes, even the not so terminally ill. Nobody knew where these people were sent to. Nobody had returned to tell us of their plight. But we knew one thing; we did not want to be among them. We did not want to be separated from our families and of course, we wanted to stay together as a family for as long as we could. Because of this, we lived in constant fear. This hospital also had a wing for the mentally disturbed people, and as naturally, the Germans were determined to get rid of these patients. On Monday July 28, 1941 twelve patients were presented as cured in this hospital. They were given injections to keep them tranquil.

Among them, was a good friend of Rumkowski, father of one of our Bnei-Akiba members, Mr. Ilsberg father of Basia Ilsberg, who was considered cured. So he too was to appear before the bestial inspectors, which meant that he would be saved. He was very nervous. He must suspected what was waiting for him if he was not to pass this inspection, and that made him even more nervous. Everything went fine, until Mr. Ilsberg was already at the door, he turned around and said: "Do you want to know, how much is so and so, times so and so"?. This killed everything, and Mr. Ilsbaerg did not pass the inspection. This remark disqualified him from being saved, and they loaded him, with the rest of the mental patients on the truck. Mr. Ilsberg asked for his talis and tephillin, and he wrapped himself in the talis, put on his tephilin and he

started to sing. This is what he sang: "Es kan nischt aso sein, und es wird nicht aso sein, as Jiden sollen alkaponen, in ganzen untergein". Translated this means "It can't be like that. It won't be like that. The Jews will not disappear from the face of this earth."

My brother, Lajser, stood on the opposite side and saw what had occurred. Nobody said a word, not even the SS-man who kept completely quiet, while the others were crying. Today when I write about this, I realize that Mr. Ilseberg was not completely crazy. He knew what he was saying, and his prediction, even though it took the entire European Jewry with it, did not eradicate the entire Jewish race. I am here to tell this story. I am one of the witnesses of what happened to the entire European Jewry, and to declare that we are here to stay. We, the Jews, will remain a great nation. G-D will help us care for our beloved Israel, and together, we will make sure that such a tragedy will never happen again. While we the witnesses are still alive, the world is trying very hard to rewrite history. In this way, they hope to eradicate their guilt, if they have any human feeling at all. The whole world stood idle, while the bestial Nazis were tormenting and murdering us and nobody did anything to help us. I believe that it is our obligation to tell the world about the bestial atrocities which the Nazis performed on us, and to remember those

who did not survive to give witness to what happened to them.

It is most difficult for me to write about the terrible things they did to us.

No human being can picture or imagine such behavior. This type of torture was unheard of in all of the history of mankind.

When I recall these incidents, I find it painful and shameful, and can hardly believe that we were able to endure these sufferings.

How could such a cultured nation be so hateful and behave worse than animals? I can not begin to describe in words what they did

to the children in Lodz and to the people they selected for

transport. It truly is humanly impossible. In addition to what

they did, the Nazis forced us to watch all these atrocities as

they were being performed. The hanging of young people for

stealing a piece of bread, or taking a belt from a factory, or for

having done nothing at all, save for being born a Jew. They

assembled hundreds of people and forced us to witness these

scenes. One could truly never sleep properly ever again, for these

pictures would follow you all the time. I often wonder, how I was

able to remain sane after these experiences.

I do not have an answer to this question. I think it is indeed a sheer miracle.

Life was very cruel to us. We had no place to go, nowhere to hide,

nobody wanted us, nobody was willing to help us, and the world

stood and watched while the Nazis burned and tortured the Jews,

just as they had done in Spain, hundreds of years earlier. It is my hope that the world has learned a lesson and this will never be allowed to happen, ever again.

ESTUSIA BITERMAN

This article is dedicated to my dear Bnei-Akiba friend Estusia Biterman, whom I got to know at a very early age. I am not going to write about the pre-war times, for I would rather tell, about our bitter ghetto times. Especially, about how our pretty and smart Estusia suffered and how she ended her young years in the ghetto, because of the bestial Nazis, who are trying today to rewrite history and tell the world that there was no Auschwitz, no Majdanek, no Chellmno, no Sobibor, no Triblinka. In general they say that these, are Jewish fabrications.

A mutual friend of Etusia and I had told me that Estusia is very sick, naturally I made it my business to go and visit her. I do not recall the name of the street, where she lived in the ghetto, but I kind of remember, that it was in one of the small streets, further up on Brzezinska. Before the ghetto this street was occupied by very poor Gentile Polish people. It was far away from where we lived in the ghetto.

Estusia lived on the ground floor. I knocked at the door, however, nobody answered. After a few minutes waiting in front of the door, I pushed the door open.

I entered this dark room, nobody was there to greet me. It was a very dark room and if not for the two windows it reminded me of a small cellar room. There were two beds on each side of the window. In the

back of the beds stood a table and chairs. Not far from it was the cold stove.

In one of the beds I found Estusia. Attached to her bed was a contraption, so that if she needed help, one of her parents would wake up to help her. It seems that, they were hard of hearing, and the only way for them to help was by pulling this string.

There was nobody in the room Estusia was there alone. I approached the bed to the right where Estusia was, and could not believe my own eyes. Where was this beautiful Estusia, her sweet smile and her intelligent expression on her face? Where did all disappear? Is this the same Estusia the most loved and popular member of Bnei-Akiba?

This was very hard for me to believe, there she was, skin and bones. Her skin looked as if it was stretched over her thin bones, like a transparent rubber sheet. Her eyes were shining like two mirrors, for she was running very high temperature. You could see that she was very sick. She was extremely happy to see me, even though it was an effort for her to speak, she was very weak.

Don't talk' I said to her, I will do the talking, just tell me what I can do to help you.

There was no response. I tried very hard to entertain her, to make her laugh, and believe it or not, I even succeeded to make her laugh. Poor Estusia was so weak, no wonder, she was so hungry, there was no food, no heat like in most houses in the ghetto, but Estusia had TB, and she

needed the food more than anybody else. She was so young, and so good, and there was no help.

Her parents were sick too, if I remember correctly, one of her parents lost their mind due to hunger.

I did not realize that Estusia had TB, for this was a very contagious disease, especially for people my age. I stayed with her for a long time I did not want to leave her alone, and waited for her mother to come back.

When her mother came back, I could see that she was not all there, and I was very sad, who is going to take care of my poor Estusia? What a terrible sight.

I spoke to my sister and I asked whether something could be done to place Estusia in a hospital. I honestly do not remember who finally got her to be placed in the hospital for TB on Wesola, which was not far from my house.

I was very happy that now, Estusia would receive the proper care, and get better eventually.

I was determined, to go and visit her. I knew that this was not easy, but with protekcja, my dear Reginka got me a pass to go to see Estusia. I was hopeful, that with the proper care Estusia would feel better. It never occurred to me that her condition would change for worse. After all my brothe Lajzer was in the same hospital with the same illness, and he got better, so while should Estusia not be able to get well too.

When I came to the hospital, the nurse took me to this huge ward with many, many beds in it, and brought me to Estusia's bed. I can't describe how shocked I was. There on the bed was Estusia, her face white as snow, on her forehead was an ice compress. I stirred at her hoping that she would recognize me, but she did not. Finally I said: Estusia, you know who I am? Your friend Hanka! She opened her eyes, looked at me and gave me a big smile. I took her hand and held it for a while, but she went off to sleep. Then she opened her eyes again and said, I am so tiered. Then she hallucinated, she talked about food, about appetizers, delicatessen, meat and other goodies. Then she said I am so hungry, and off to sleep she went again, to a different world.

I stood there pinned to the floor, it broke my heart, what could I do to help her? It could have been me lying there and suffering like Estusia, and that is when I finally realized that her days were numbered, that it was not in my power to save my beautiful, young friend. And then I said to myself maybe G-d is trying to spare all my wonderful friends from the future, which I eventually found out by myself was even worse than the present time. Maybe G-d is calling all these good souls to His Kingdom to save them from all their sufferings. I stood there paralyzed, all these wonderful young friends are dying what is happening to us, I could not move.

Suddenly, I felt somebody's hand on my shoulder, I looked to see who it was, it was the nurse, she came to ask me to leave. I stood there like in a stoopor, and the presence of nurse brought me back to reality.

I left the hospital very depressed, I could not find a place for myself, I was loosing friends left and right, and I could not cope with it. What

was going to happen to the rest of us? How were we going to survive under these circumstances? All our dear ones were dying, and we are not able to help them.

Three days later, Estusia Biterman died, and her suffering came to an end, I prayed that she went to heaven, and that G-d took good care of her, for she was a wonderful individual, and surely deserved the best..

□

GHETTO LODZ - SEPTEMBER 1942-

Algemeine SPERRE

September 1942 was unusually hot, we had no fans, no air conditioners, there was nothing to cool us off a little. We suffered from the heat and in addition to it, we had very little food to eat. The epidemic of Typhoid was rampant. People were dying by the hundreds from Typhoid and other illnesses. My beloved sister was also infected with this disease, as were the other members of my family. However, Reginka's case was so bad, that after doctoring her at home, we were forced to put her in the hospital.

The hospital for infectious diseases was located on Drewnowska. The only one that could go to visit her was our dear mother. No minors were allowed in this hospital. Occasionally, my older brother would sneak in. Reginka was so terribly sick. She ran dangerously high fevers. Being that she was Rumkowski's messenger, they took good care of her.

On the first of September 1942, early in the morning, the German trucks pulled up in front of the hospital, on Lagiewnicka Street.

Their aim was to get rid of all the sick patients, regardless of age. This they did in the most brutal and bestial way. To speed up this "action", they threw the patients out of the windows into the trucks, as if they were tossing sacks of potatoes or apples into a bin. They threw the children out the window one on top of another. Some of the patients, with the help of the Jewish doctors, jumped out of the windows and in this way they saved themselves. Very few people were able to save themselves, either because they were too weak and sick, or because they did not have the chance to do so. Most of the patients, who were children, were not lucky enough to save themselves.

When the Nazis were finished emptying the hospitals, they started to take action on different parts of the ghetto. They divided the ghetto into sections. They forbade people to leave their houses, for this was a systematic plan to get the children and the older people out of the ghetto. They went from house to house, and when a mother refused to give up her child, the SS-man would tear the child away from the mother, and throw the child against the concrete wall until the blood would start gushing. Sometimes, instead, the Nazis would shoot the child in the crying mother's presence. In this famous Sperre, or blockade, 20,000 Jews were deported and killed in Chelmno.

When we got word of this terrible news about the hospitals, we were very worried. We were afraid that the same thing was going to happen to our sister Reginka, who was hospitalized in a different hospital, the hospital for infectious diseases. We called all the influential people we knew and tried to engage all the "protekcja" we could find in order to save our beloved sister. We even called Chaim Rumkowski, to make sure that he knew to save our sister. After all, she was his messenger, and he ought to have some responsibility for her.

Due to our persistence, the director of the hospital got orders from the higher-ups in the ghetto administration. They dressed Reginka in a nurse's uniform, they sat her at a desk to make believe that she was one of the nurses. And that is how our sister was saved from the deportation, which we all know today, meant death. When the "akcja", or action, was finished, we took our sister home, but this was not the end. She was registered at the hospital, and it was well known that she was a patient there. We were afraid that they might come to our apartment to look for her, and we could not allow this to happen. Our precious Reginka had to be saved. So, we had to hide her.

Every day we switched her from one house to another, for we were not sure when this would end. Poor Reginka was so sick. All during this time, I doubt whether she knew what was happening. She

continued to run very high fevers, and most of the time she was delirious and kept on hallucinating. We continued to hide her until things quieted down, and the SS was finished with their cruel emptying all the hospitals in the ghetto. We brought Reginka back to our apartment and we had to make sure that she would be saved.

We had a few days peace, and then came the black September. This was the famous GESPERE, which lasted from September 5th to September 12th of 1942. My brother, Lajzer, got the key to one of the offices on Lutomierska Street. In the middle of the night we sneaked into this office. This was a small room, no bigger than most bathrooms. It was surely not big enough for a family of six, especially since we had to sleep there. We brought very little food with us, just enough to survive, but at a time like this, we were anxious to save our lives, at any cost, even if it meant being near starvation. The major worry was to hide from the SS. Otherwise, all of us would land up on the transport, and we would be deported to death camp, like the rest of the people. We never heard from those who were deported. Today we know that they were deported to Chelmno, they were surely murdered. Naturally at that time, we did not know anything about Vernichtungs Lagers, the death camps. We could not have imagined how these deportees met

with such a terrible end. All of this, we first discovered at the end of the war.

My uncle Shmuel, aunt Bajla, and their family were also taken to be deported during the SPERRE. My cousin Hanka and her brother Lajzer were with them, but the Jewish police pushed little Lajzer off the truck, to save this little boy. So little Lajzer got in touch with aunt Sara and told her what happened to him and his family. He told them that his family was in the Czarnieckiego prison, and could they do something to save them. He could not get in touch with us because at that time we lived on the other side of the bridge, and there was no way to get to the other side. Aunt Sara and our two cousins tried their best to save uncle Schmuel and his family. Unfortunately they could not save the entire family. They were able to save little Lajzer's sister, Hanka, who had to go through an inspection. Since she was young and healthy, she passed the inspection, and they released her from prison. She was able to take care of her brother. And that is how Hanka and her little brother were saved from Chelmno and were left in the ghetto till the end of August of 1944. Unfortunately little Lajzer was killed in Auschwitz, and only Hanka survived the war. Hanka's young brother, Lajzer, possibly thirteen years old, managed to save his sister's life.

So let me continue with the SPERRE: The SS blocked off the ghetto and we were not allowed on the street during this "action". In one week or eight days, which seemed like an eternity, 15,000 to 20,000 Jews were taken out of the ghetto and deported to Chelmno. As we know today, all of them were killed there.

On September 5th, 1942 Chaim Rumkowski gave his famous speech: "By the law of the German authorities about 25,000 Jews under the age of ten and over sixty five must be resettled out of the ghetto. Please give up your children and your old".

The resettlement commission consisted of Leon Rosenblat, Szaja-Stanislaw Jacobson, Henryk Naftalin, Zygmunt Blemer, Grynberg. Their offices were on Platz Koscielny number 4. The Gestapo did not wait for the Jewish police. Originally, the Jewish police was supposed to get the people, and for that they would use their "black lists". The Gestapo decided to be the masters by visual impression. It was enough to look at them and we were scared, and trembling.

The Jewish police, and Jewish firemen were ordered by the Gestapo to surround the streets block by block. The Gestapo would first shoot into the air as a signal for people to leave their apartments and assemble in the courtyard.

The Gestapo ordered the Jewish police and the Jewish firemen to search each apartment. They were ordered to make sure that everybody was out of the apartment and bring down anyone who tried to hide. So while the Jewish police was doing the searching, the Gestapo did their own inspection.

They inspected each person, to make sure that they were a good specimen for the hard work in the ghetto. If however, the Gestapo did not like your looks, then you had to join the people who were selected to be deported. The Chmól-Jankiel Rosenberg from the "Biala Gwardia" (The White Guard) was mobilized to carry the weak and the sick to the trucks. If anybody tried to hide or escape, the Gestapo shot them on the spot. There were no exceptions and many people lost their lives this way. This was the "GESPERE" or as they called it in Polish SZPERA.

As for us, we hid in this little office for a few days. We slept on the bare floors and we did not complain. We only wanted to be allowed to remain in the ghetto, and avoid the deportation into the unknown. Eventually we returned to our room.

My brother had to go back to work, he worked at a bakery which was bonus, not many people were privileged to get this opportunity. He was able to eat bread there, and bring home a whole bread for the family. This, however, was only for three months. Therefore I remained to be in charge of my parents and the rest of the family.

Just a few days later we suddenly heard, two gun shots in the air and loud screaming: "Alles Rauss, Alles Rauss": Everyone, out!

I knew what this meant, and I also knew that if I took my father and mother down, as well as Reginka, (who was still so sick), we would all end up where the rest of the people did.

I had to think quickly and take immediate action. Our lives were at stake. I put my mother into the wardrobe, and I put Reginka between the bedding in one of the beds. I put my father into the coal bin, and my younger brother, Chaim, and I went down to where the people were assembled. My older brother, Lajser, was away at work. The Jewish police were running up and down yelling and checking the rooms to make sure that everybody went down.

Chaim and I stood next to each other and there were lots of people all over. On the left we could see the trucks waiting to load the people for transport. To the right, I saw an SS-man shooting a Jewish man who was coming from the adjacent building from Limnowskiego, for no apparent reason. Chaim and I were very worried. What if the police found my family in the room? If the Gestapo found them, they would surely shoot them. I had to hide my fears. I did not want to show my despair, so I stood next to Chaim until it was our turn to be inspected by the Gestapo. We both passed the inspection, but we had to wait until they released everybody. I was trembling for I could not wait for the minute

when I could go back to our room and to see for myself that my family was safe.

Finally, there came the whistle, and with it the order to disappear. I could not wait. I quickly ran and climbed the steps two at the time. If I could have flown, it would not have been fast enough for me. I ran up to the third floor, to see whether my family was safe. When I finally got to our room, the first person I went to check was my sister, for I was afraid that she could have died under the heavy bedding in this terrible heat. She was all right. Then I went to my mother and got her out of the wardrobe. She too was fine. The last person that I checked on was my father, in the coal bin.

He too was safe. I apologized to him for hiding him in such a terrible place, and I can still hear his answer: "This is okay. This is the place for a Jew today. Don't worry".

Anyhow, I saved my family all by myself, and I am sure that it was G-d's will to save them, and that is why I was successful. When my big brother got home from work, they told him what I did and he was very proud of me. We would still be able to be together.

In the mean time my sister was still sick with Typhoid. We had to find a way to separate her from the rest of the family, because Typhoid is a very contagious disease. Since some of the people on our floor had been deported, we got one empty room and we transferred Reginka there. We did everything possible to help her

get well, which took a few weeks. She was so sick, that at times we did not believe that she was going to make it. She hallucinated from her high fever, she begged for special food which was impossible to get in the ghetto. It was pitiful to listen to her. But thank G-D, eventually she got better.

The sad thing was that the poor girl lost most of her beautiful, red hair. What does a little girl do without hair? She had to wear a kerchief at all times, and she was very upset about it.

We all remembered our maid Ida who had lost her hair to Typhoid, and her hair never grew back. Our mother started to take Reginka to all different doctors to see whether they could help her. After many months, my sister's hair began to grow. We were all excited and so happy for her. Reginka was a special child, a special daughter and a special sister. A year went by, and Reginka got her hair back even more beautiful than before. This was a real miracle. So when we came to Auschwitz in the year of 1944, the SS shave this beautiful red hair off completely.

This completes one episode of the famous deportation, the SPERRE the unforgettable SPERRE of 1942 in the ghetto Lodz. Like all my writings I do not go into details of terrible conditions which we suffered during this period and the ghetto in general.

JANUARY 5, 1943

My father passed away on January 5, 1943, which was the 28th day of Hebrew month of Tevet, and today I left alone to celebrate the second anniversary of his death.

Every time I go to sleep the panorama of my horrible years stares me right in the eyes. Especially my father's death, which surely was a nightmare for me. I was a teenager and was very attached to my father, who was my mentor.

The winter of January 1943 was very bad, there was frost and sleet all over, and the cold would not let up. My father has been sick for about three weeks. Nobody thought that his illness would lead to his death. He did not seem to be in any danger, these things happened before, and he would recuperate and all would be well again.

However this time as the days passed, he seemed suddenly to get weaker and weaker and we began to fear, but none of us thought that these would be his last days. My father was not a robust man,

you would rather call a weak person, he would fast twice a week. Food was not his most important thing in life.

My father never complained, he was happy and grateful for everything that came across in his life. Even in this terrible ghetto you would hardly hear a negative word out of his mouth. The only change that we could notice was that my father stopped smiling which to us children was something we could not believe. Therefore we were not aware that this time his illness was not the same as usual. The truth is that my father refused to eat anything that was not kosher, and that surely was the reason of his illness, for he died of malnutrition.

So when things got bad I volunteered to stay up with him at night, so that my mother should be able to get some sleep for a change. We put up the collapsible bed for me right next to my father's bed. This way, I was able to watch every movement he made. And in the event that he would ask for something I would be right there to help him.

I slept in my dress, just in case I needed to go to the drugstore, or to call for a doctor.

In the morning I would rush to work, I had to report to my office like the rest of the ghetto inhabitants. My father's illness was no excuse to miss work.

The January nights were very long and very cold. We even moved the little cast iron stove closer to my father's bed so he should have some heat. Heat if you could call it so, what a laugh! There was barely enough coal or as they called it brickets to cook a small portion of soup for my sick father.

On the last Shabath I was the "Shabath Goy". I made lit the fire in this little stove, because my father needed some warm food. I did not ask any questions, for I was convinced that according to our Torah "Pekuach Nefesh" I was allowed to do this for my father, who was pretty ill at this time.

Nobody ate from this food it was only for my father, so I did not feel that I committed a sin. I did not ask my father whether I could do it or not, I did what I thought was right for him.

If I remember correctly my father did not ask me what I was doing. He did not reprimand me; I am convinced that he knew that I did this out of love for him to save his life. Nothing was going to be in my way, as far as my father was concerned.

One of those nights I developed a terrible itching under my arms, I did not know the reason for it, so I took off my dress. When I

turned my dress inside out I was terrible surprised to see that the seams were full of lice. I was beside myself, what was I going to do? Here I was with my sick father, I was afraid that I might give it to him.

Everybody in my family was asleep. I had to think very fast, and make sure I did not wake anybody, because they too had to get some rest. They too had to go to work and work hard for the bestial Nazis.

Well, first I tried to clean my dress, and then I went to get some water and soap to wash the dress and myself. When I got to the pail of water, the water was one piece of ice. Again I did not know what to do, so I started to chop the ice quietly so that nobody should wake up. Then I took the ice and the soap, and started scrubbing my entire body wit soap and ice. I scrubbed my body until it was red like a lobster, and I did the same to my dress. When I was finished I put the wet dress on my body, in spite of the bitter cold in our room. I was afraid for my father to wake and to see my predicament; he would have been very upset. I lay down on my bed, and covered myself, so that the dress should at least dry out a little bit.

Believe it or not, by the time I had to go to work everything was OK, I really do not know how this happened, how did a frozen dress dry out on me, and how I did not get sick wearing a wet dress all night long, this was a sheer miracle.

Father slept through the night; before I went to work I gave him his Talith (Prayer Shawl) and his Tefilin, so he could pray in bed. My mother took care of my father while I went to work. There was always somebody with my father; he was never left alone when he was sick.

One day when I came home from work, there was auntie Sara my father's sister. She was left in the ghetto with her only son Lolus, and even though uncle Jozio her husband sent her papers to come to Israel, the Nazis would not let her out of the ghetto. They said that she was still of working age. Auntie Sara was weak and very depressed like the rest of the ghetto population. So when she used to come to see my father, she would talk to him and complain about her situation. My father was not much older than auntie Sara, but he was of great support to her and she loved my father very much. All this was fine while my father was well, but when he was sick he really could not help her.

One evening she came to see him, and as usual started to tell him, about her troubles. She cried, and that upset my father very much, he wanted to help her, but what could he do, in the state he was now?

My brother Lajser, could not take it anymore, he went over to Tante Sara, and took her away from the foot of my father's bed. Then he told her the following: "What are you doing? Don't you see that my father is very sick? Why are you making him suffer? She stopped, and I wonder whether she understood the situation, she was so absorbed in her own world, that nothing penetrated.

On Monday my father complained that his throat hurts him. So we started to look for throat specialists, which was not easy in the ghetto. But we had a Reginka and with her connections we got Dr. Mazur to come to our house. Dr. Mazur came to our house about 5:00 in the afternoon. He examined my father's throat and without a single word, he started walking towards the door. I run after him, Dr. Mazur I said: what's wrong with my father? He turned around and this is what he said to me: "Can't you see it, you have a dying man there". I was speechless; I could not move from the place, I did not believe what I was told by the doctor. I stood there paralyzed, as if the doctor took a knife and cut me in half. Was it true what he said about my father? What was I going to

tell my beloved father, and my beloved mother, my brothers and my little sister?

I stood there like pinned to the floor; I do not know where I took the strength to return to our room.

When I finally got back to the room, I went to my father's bed. I kissed my father many times and told him that he will be all right. That it is only a red red throat. My father looked at me and did not say anything I guess he knew better.

When my family returned home I had no nerve to repeat what Dr. Mazur told me, I told them, that father will be OK.

And then came another night for me to take care of my father. By this time it was already Monday night. I watched my father like a hock; I kept the fears to myself. I tried to convince myself, that the doctor was wrong and that my father would eventually get well. My father tried very hard to help me along, and we both played the game very well.

When my father fell asleep, and his breathing was normal, I said to myself, the doctor is crazy, look how peacefully my father is sleeping, and he slept without any effort.

When Tuesday came around I took a day off from work so I could stay home with my father.

In the morning my father asked for his "Nagel Wasser", and then for his Talith and Tefilin. He again prayed in bed for he had no strength to leave the bed. While davening, he called me over to his bed and said: "You know a funny thing just happened to me, I saw my brother Schmiel and his family, I do not understand why". I must have made a face, because my father turned around to me and said: "Do not repeat to anybody what I just told you". Why would my father see uncle Schmiel, who together with his family was taken away to the unknown in September of 1942, during the Allgemeine Gespehre. Here we are a year and a half later, what is the significance of this vision, of this hallucination?

Here again I could not share this with anybody, I made a promise to my father, but I was very troubled about it, this was not so simple.

In addition to what he told me I could again see the black wagon, which came to move us from Zgierska 48 to Franciszkańska 36. This was a black wagon that moved our belongings as well as our father. Ever since then this was a bad omen for me, about which I did not tell anybody, for I was afraid that maybe my father would die.

A few weeks before my grandma Mariem had a heart attack and died, even though she was not sick before, I also had a bad dream. I dreamed that my grandma died.

And unfortunately a few weeks after my dream, and after my grandam's heart attack she died just like in my dream.

So now that I again had this bad dream, I was pretty scared and afraid that the bad dream could change into reality. Naturally I did not dare to share my dreams with anybody and had to live with them all by myself.

So when my father finished praying I gave him some breakfast. He ate, rested and eventually fell asleep. I was very nervous, very uneasy, rather afraid, and had to carry these thoughts to myself, which was very difficult for me.

My father never complained, he never "kwetched", no matter what hurt him; he never wanted to cause us any suffering. He took his pain like an angel; whatever G-D had in store for him he accepted graciously without any complaint, he was a real Zadik (righteous man).

Tuesday afternoon passed very uneventful, very similar to the days gone by in the past. However, towards the evening he started feeling bad, he was very weak, and by the time midnight came

around, he had trouble breathing. My brother Lajser was in his room on Marysin, so my mother and Reginka went to look for a doctor, (right in the middle of the night). My little brother Chaim also went looking for a doctor, I was left alone with my father, who could hardly talk.

I took my father in my arms and held him, for I felt that if he would sit up he would be able to breath better. Suddenly I noticed that his face was turning white, and that he was getting weaker by the minute. I grabbed some sugar and forced a spoon of sugar into his mouth, which I thought would give him some energy.

I sat there with my arms around him, then I asked him: "How do you feel", and he managed to answer: "Es ist mir besser", which meant I feel better.

I was happy to hear that, I guess I wanted to believe this. I sat there while his soul was leaving his body, kissing him all over, not realizing that his soul expired.

When my mother and Reginka returned without a doctor, they realized that my father was no more, and that is when I first understood that he was death. We all screamed, hoping that he would wake up, we cried, nothing helped us, my father was gone. And I had to lay him down on his bed and stop holding him the way I did for the past hour.

When Chaim returned he and I had to put my father on the floor, we lit a candle, and that was how my father left this world and us.

I am convinced that my father could not die while my mother and Reginka were in the room, he just waited for them to leave, he knew what this would do to them, he wanted to die in piece, and that is what he did. None of us wanted to accept reality, how could this happen to us, we tried so hard to help one another.

Early in the morning we called my brother's office and told him the terrible news. The rest of the family had to be notified, by sending somebody over; there were no private telephones in the ghetto. But since it was forbidden to go to the cemetery or have a private funeral this was not much of a problem. My brother Lajzer and my mother made all the arrangements, which was very hard for them. Number one, because it was her husband my for my brother because this was his father. Number two because nothing was easy in the ghetto.

Everybody was busy with different errands. I was elected to stay home, to wait for the man from the Chevra Kadisha to do the Tachara. As you know it is the greatest honor in the Jewish religion to burry the death as soon as possible, so we tried very

hard to make sure that my father would be buried within a few hours.

The man from the Chevra Kadisha arrived, I did not know him neither did he know me. He asked me for the vessel in which we wash our clothes, and I gave him this round galvanized vessel in which we washed our laundry.

He poured lots of water into it, and told me to stand behind the wardrobe in the so-called kitchen. I did not know how Tachara is being done, so I just waited, but at one point I must have peeked, not that I remember anything of what I saw, but I know that whatever it was it upset me very much.

The 1943 winter was bitter cold; people were dying like flies from starvation, illnesses from torture.

We were determined to accompany my father to his last resting place, no matter what. And this is exactly what we did. We walked behind the hearse with some close family and a few Buchirim, (my father's students), and then the hearse took off.

The frost was biting, we were freezing, we were not dressed well, and our hands and feet felt numb, but nothing stopped us. We walked all the way to the cemetery, which far away.

When we got to the cemetery we saw hundreds of bodies piled up to be buried, there was nobody to accompany them.

The Nazis had decreed that nobody is allowed at the cemetery, for if they would find them the Nazis would shoot them. We did not care, our goal was to see that our father should be buried according to the Jewish law, and that we should be there when he would put to his last resting place, no matter what. And that is exactly what we did.

Because of some protekcja, my father was assigned a grave in the first row of the section that was opened just before the war, not on the part that they used to burry the people who died in the ghetto. They started to dig the grave, this was very difficult everything was frozen; this was a real Siberian winter.

Suddenly Mr. Bialer the director of the cemetery appeared, and when he saw my mother he asked her whose funeral this was and she told him.

Oh! He said hold it, for Itzchack Flatto this is not a proper grave. Hold it, hold it he told the gravediggers, and he went over to the big Ohel where the famous Rabbi Borenstein was buried. This was just a few graves to the right, and he asked the gravediggers to dig a new grave adjacent to this big Ohel.

This took quiet a while the earth was completely frozen, and it was almost impossible to open the grave. We had to keep very quiet so, that nobody should hear us, for by law we had no right to be there in the first place. Finally the grave was ready for burial, they lifted my father's body, which was resting on a wooden board, and covered with his Talith. As they lowered his body the wind blew away his Talith, and I had the last peek of my fathers beloved face, and that was the end forever and ever.

My brothers said Kadish very quietly, we were lucky to have a minian (10 men), there were no eulogies. Then we kept on moving away from the grave and disbursing quickly. We left the cemetery separately so that nobody should see us.

Again we had a long way to our house. I held my mother tightly under my arm, and Reginka on the other side, we did not talk, we were speechless. Chaïm and Lajser and the rest of our small family followed us.

Our hearts were heavy, our stomachs were empty, our bodies were frozen, and our minds were blank, and that was how we were moving forward all the way, all of us broken up.

The crown of our house was gone forever, and who was going to take his place? And who was fit to take his place? What a terrible

loss? My poor mother, so young and already a widow, left alone without parents, without a husband, left with her brothers and sisters, left with four children in the middle of this horrible war and ghetto. Who was going to help her, she lost.

Our father who was an angel from heaven, he was put on this earth to spread the Torah, his wisdom, his Chessed, his kindness and good deeds. His honesty followed him on every step of his life. His sensitivity and compassion towards every human being is almost impossible to describe. My big brother said, that he has never met another human being who lived by the holy book, as did our beloved father.

None of us believed that our mother would be able to get over this terrible void. We tried so hard to tell her all the time how much we love her, and how much we need her, and how she must try at least for our sake to carry on. To that she would always answer: "A wife that lost a husband is like an orphan, she has nothing left in this world, but I am a mother and I love my children, and I promise you, I will try my best, but G-D has shamed me and how will I manage without my beloved Husband?"

To understand my mother's fears, one had to know my father personally; he was not an average person. It is true that he was a

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great scholar, His Midos (his wonderful character traits) are seldom found, he practice what he preached, and My mother surely appreciated his way of life and like him lived only to help others whenever she could.

So our tragedy was great, and since I was very attached to my father, I had a hard time accepting his death. Everybody was afraid that I should not become melancholic, depressed. I missed him so much, and in spite of it all, I had to put on an act for my poor mother, we all did, for we all knew that she was hit harder than all of us.

This was something to see even my cousins joined us to keep our family together; this was the only way to help my mother and each other.

When we got home from the funeral, we sat on the bear floor, the room was cold and lonely, there was no traditional meal, like bagels and eggs, there was nothing, there was only hunger and loneliness, there was not even a Minian for my brothers to say Kadish again. They had to go to the secret Shul on Brzezinska Street.

There we sat (Shiva) all by ourselves, cold hungry and so terrible unhappy, how we missed our beloved father only G-D knew.

Occasionally some neighbors would come by, but on the whole we

were alone, terrible alone, no one to help, no one to talk, we were so clamped in.

Can you imagine what would have been, if my father would have passed away during normal times, the streets of Lodz would be full of people. His funeral would have been one long funeral parade; there would have been long eulogies by most famous Rabbis. Our home would be packed with people, and here there is nothing, just us.

We were all absorbed with the same thought, which was going to teach us, who was going to lecture us in the most tactful way? We were left alone with our poor

Young mother in these terrible circumstances, there was no tomorrow, no future, just bleak outlook and misery.

The days of Shiva seem never to end, and frankly speaking we did not want them to end, our father was no more, what is there to wait for. The only reason we survived was because we were together, we were a family in tact, and not many like us were left together in this ghetto. We were a loving and caring family, and that is why we were able to absorb these inhuman living conditions in the Lodzer Ghetto.

Little did we know what was going to happen to us a year and a half later?

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Czestochowa

While working in the office of the Verteilungsstelle as a registrar, I received papers for the deportation, destination, city of Czestochowa-Poland.

My mother, my brothers, and my sister as well as myself, were besides ourselves. To be separated from my family and be sent to the unknown was a big tragedy, something we could not survive. All these years we were trying through all sort of ways to stay together. This kept us as a family in spite of all the terrible living conditions in the ghetto.

When this "death Certificate" came, what were we to do? How was I going to escape the deportation?

I who was not an outgoing person, I was very naive, withdrawn and inexperienced, how was I going to survive without my family? Where did they get my name from? Who was the culprit?

No matter how many questions we asked, there were no answers.

I had no choice, but report to the place they designated for the candidates to Czestochowa deportees.

The instructions were that we are to take a "rucksack" (backpack) with our belongings and come on the specific date to register.

My sister (Reginka) promised me that she would do whatever is in her power through "Protekcja" to get me out of there.

My entire family accompanied me to the assembly hall for the deportees to Czestochowa, which was located in a big old movie house on Zgierska street. Inside the movie house there were partitions with bunk-beds, my bed was located near the window, which gave me a chance to converse with my family. This place was to quarantine us, before they were going

young girls. It seemed to me that they must have gotten my name, from the ghetto gimnazjum, where I was registered as a student for a time.

We were all very upset, nobody knew what this was all about, where would they be sending us to? What and where would we be working? Nobody knew the answers. In spite of the most inhuman conditions in the Litzmanstadt ghetto, in spite of the terrible starvation, this was still our home, here was my entire family, and I hated to leave them. My fears and that of my family, were growing from day to day.

I was there for quite a few days, and hoped that my sister would be able to get me out of there. My sister (Reginka) worked very hard, to get me out of there, this was not an easy task, you really needed a lot of protekcja (pull) a lot of push to be excused.

The five day stay at this old delapidated movie house, depressed me very much, I lived with this terrible fear of the unknown, and terrible separation from my family which was the worst.

Every day my mother and the rest of the family would come to the window to say hello to me, and they all suffered as much as I did, we were such a devoted family, and this happened shortly after my father died. To us to be separated from each other, was like being designated for death, even though we had absolutely no idea of the existence of any concentration camps, nor crematoriums. Had we known the truth, of what happened to all the deportees, none of us would leave the ghetto, we would rather die right here than let ourselves be murdered in this bestial way. Unfortunately we believed the Nazis, that they are sending us to different locations, to work, just like we did here in the ghetto.

And that is exactly why they were so successful in getting us to obey and believe their lies. To prove their lies, occasionally somebody would receive a postcard from a loved one, to reassure us that these transports were living and working in different cities. This these "clever" Nazis did to reassure us, that what the Nazis were telling us was true, and this way people would have confidence and listen to their lies.

Can you comprehend how perfect their plans worked all over Europe. in order to complete their killings and murderings of our dear mothers, fathers, brothers and sisters?

Many of the girls that I was with in this transport, felt that they have nothing to lose, their family were gone, they died of starvation or other terrible diseases or were deported to the unknown. So what was there for them to lose? no ties whatsoever. they were alone in this ghetto hell, all by themselves, maybe they thought, things would be different for them in Czestochowa.

Naturally rumors were going around that things were better in Czestochowa, people were not starving, like they did here in our homeland. For them it paid to take a chance, and try for the better.

In the mean time my sister tried very hard to get me out of here, my mother was completely broken up, she could not take another loss, my father died recently and the trauma was still there. This was much too much for my poor mother, and her shattered nerves. Every time she came to see me through the, I could see that her eyes were swollen and red from crying, and that was not at all like my mother, she was a very strong, energetic person, this was a little

too much she could bear.

Every day seemed like an eternity, I had no choice in this matter, we just had to wait and see what would happen, and hope that Reginka would be successful.

There were rumors that some people were willing to volunteer, and fill in for those people who do not wish to leave the ghetto. These volunteers were willing to take this chance, hoping that they would better themselves in Czestochowa.

Finally my sister succeeded in getting permission to get me out from here, and on the fifth day she appeared inside the movie house with the papers, for me to leave this place.

I cannot describe our happiness, when I joined my beloved mother, and brothers, we all cried without a stop. Our happiness was so great, the fact that we can be together, had no end. It did not matter, how difficult and terrible our lives were in the ghetto, the main thing was that we were together again.

The following day I returned to my office, and got my job back, as if nothing happened. Everybody was very happy to see me, and everybody, was sorry that I had to go through this ordeal of being quarantined for five days.

After the war, I found out that, Czestochowa was very good camp, that compared to Lodz-Ghetto it was a heaven, in fact most people who worked in the Czestochowa camps survived intact, and were never sent to a concentration camp.

Knowing that, I certainly do not feel guilty, for whoever went to Czestochowa in my place, did not have to suffer as I did in all the concentration camps, for they were the victors, and I was the

looser, but who was to know that in advance. I feel good for all these people who went on this transport, at least they had an easier life, and did not have to see the horrible things that we had to witness.

Anyhow, I want to conclude that to me it was very important to stay with my family no matter what the future had in store for me, all the days I spent with my family were worth my eventual sufferings for I loved, and will always love them for the rest of my life.

to wait on the terrace, at least they had an easier

time than I had.

They were worth my waiting, certainly.

They have been for the rest of my life.

LAST DEPORTATION FROM THE LODZER GHETTO

MAY 1944-AUGUST 31 1944

Early in May of 1944, there were rumors that the Nazis were going to liquidate the ghetto.

In 1944 Himler already ordered the liquidation of the Lodzer Ghetto, but Hans

Bibow kept on postponing this order with all sorts of promises.

So Hans Bibow promised the people of the ghetto, that the people would be deported deep into Germany. He promised that people would have better living conditions and plenty of food. The only thing the people would have to do was to clean up the cities which have been bombed.

He told them that the Russians were already in Praga-Warsaw, and Lodz would become another front, and he was trying to save the Jews, he wanted them to survive the war.

In the meantime because of minister Spearer's intervention with Hitler, the deportation of the ghetto Lodz was stopped on July 15, 1944. There was great happiness among the Jewish people. They let them return to their own homes from their hiding places.

The food cooperatives where they distributed the food rations were opened again. Everybody was very happy, there was new hope that maybe the war will be over soon, and we would be among the lucky survivors. "Wyzwolenie" freedom is here, that was on everybody's lips.

However, this did not last very long. Two weeks later the Warsaw revolt started. On August 1, 1944, Chaim Rumkowski the Jewish leader of the ghetto or as they called him the king, was informed by the Germans, that he is to renew the deportations, and that the entire ghetto will be liquidated.

You can imagine what happened to us, we went from hope to despair. We did not know what to do; there was panic all over the ghetto.

Hans Biebow, Bradfish and Czarnula the German leaders of the ghetto were running around the ghetto trying to convince the people that this will be the front and that they are trying to save us. They want us to survive the war, which according to them is coming to an end. Therefore they were trying to send us deep

into Germany, where life would be safe. They promised that we would work in Germany just as we did in the ghetto.

They asked people to come to different places the so-called "ZBOROWYCH POSTERUNKACH" (gathering places).

According to statistics maybe 80 people volunteered, people did not want to leave the ghetto. Especially since the Gestapo openly mentioned that Lodz was becoming a front between the Germans and the Russians. That meant that the end of the war was near and we did not want to loose the opportunity to be freed right here in our own city.

Rumkowski run around asking people to leave, but his asking did not help him, so Hans Biebow started to run around begging: "Meine Juden" and he kept on promising the world, after which additional 12 people volunteered. When the

Gestapo realized that nobody is willing to leave they came up with a different idea. They used force, they blocked off one part of the ghetto streets. This they did around the 9th of August. They used their power, shooting people left and right. And this way they got together about 2000 people.

After that day they continued the round up every single day, until the last transport which took place on August 30,1944.

Here is a short version of a Jewish poem about the ghetto:

"Sztaj ich ejnzam, ferjosemt. Ful mit sin'ach un has.

"Ich, dos hejmlose kind, Fund der oremer ghetto-

gas.....

I always have the feeling that if I will share my ghetto and camp experiences with the paper, maybe I will feel better; maybe I will lessen my suffering a little. Unfortunately I can never achieve this, no matter how hard I try, and it does not help me.

"AUSCHWITZ"CREMATORIUM.....The Ashes of our family and friends.... .

I remember our way to Auschwitz. I remember how upset my dear mother was because we left our backpack and other baggage on the Radogosch station in Lodz. My rucksack had important papers in it. There was my father's Smicha-His rabbinical diploma, there were some "Payrushim" he wrote. I was not going to leave these papers in the ghetto, they were too dear to me, and there was my first ghetto diary, which I wrote for the last five years. All these must have gone up in fire, which hurts me very much.

Maybe if I did not take these things with me, maybe they would have remained in the ghetto. And as they were cleaning the ghetto, these Jewish people would have saved these documents as they did

with the others, which they found at the end of 1944 in Lodz ghetto.

We found our mother very worried and she usually did not show her worries to us, she always tried to protect us.

Why were you so upset my dear mother? Why? ?????????? Now I understand you better, now I know why. You were a mother. A loving dedicated mother, all you cared were your children, and all you worried were your children. There was nothing we could do or tell you not to worry, all you cared was to make your children happy, and to give them all you could, to make their live easier in these difficult war years. This was very difficult for my mother for it was only one since my beloved father passed away, and she had to be both to us a mother and a father.

I will continue with the actual deportation:

When we got to Radogoszcz we met Mr. Groch our neighbor from Marysin, he offered to take us off the train, but my mother did not want to move anymore. She said that she has become a fatalist and whatever is going to happen, should happen, at this moment she had no more energy to fight for her life, she just gave up. After all they promised us that we are going to Germany to work, and

that nothing is going to happen to us. They are only shipping us into Germany to save us, for this area is becoming a war zone. Maybe she hoped that those promises were true, I really do not know what went on in my mother's mind.

I still remember the words that Mr. Groch said on the Radogoszcz railroad station in Lodz: " Don't worry about the backpacks, because if you will receive them however if not, then even what you have with you right now they will also take away from you. Let's hope that you will be left with the baggage that you have right now". We did not understand what Mr. Groch meant by these words,

Mr. Groch did not want to say anything anymore, and after this statement he disappeared. But before he left, he wished us a good journey and all the best, these words he practically forced out of his mouth.

We were pushed into the boxed cars, they sealed and locked the cars we were all squeezed into a corner, and we tried to make room for our mother so she should be able to sleep. Whatever backpacks we possessed we used them as a pillow for our dear mother.

The train did not move it stood still. After two hours, they opened the doors, so they could distribute our last "POSILEK" our last ration in the Lodzer ghetto, this surely was our last food,

on the soil that we were born, and where I spent my beautiful childhood. In the past nobody could dream to receive a whole bread and fifteen dkg sugar, which one could eat, like we used to say in the ghetto: "Proviant Etatovy, Food without the ration cards, without a specified time, this was not heard of in the ghetto, to get something for nothing, what a ball.

After the distribution of the food, there was a lot of noise in our train. All those that were hungry grabbed the bread like wild beasts, like a cyclone would hit them. All of them wanted to grab the bread and sugar for themselves; they were not willing to share it with the rest of the people. In the meantime, the day was coming to an end, and it was getting dark therefore it was even darker in our compartment. Remember, these were boxed cars to transport cattle not people.

Nobody wanted to think about the future. Nobody wanted to know that maybe in an hour or two one could disappear from this horizon. Everybody was busy with the bread and sugar. Besides that, nothing and nobody bothered them, they were oblivious, all they cared was their food, they were very hungry, and this unexpected food filled their empty stomachs.

And that's how we stood in these trains on the Radogoszcz station until the middle of the night. When the train finally moved from,

everybody was happy that the train finally was leaving Lodz, except maybe I, because I was afraid of the future. I was afraid of living in a camp and the camp life even though I have never witness such. I did not like the camp people, whom we met occasionally in the ghetto. When they were sent to the ghetto from the camps. They were different from us. Real camp life was not familiar to us. Who would be willing to believe, this was absurd, how could anybody imagine such a life for any human being? The ghetto was already pretty bad, everybody knows about the conditions in the Lodzer ghetto, but our family was fortunate to be in tact, except for our dear father who passed away in 1943, and that made a big difference in our family life.

Because we had so very little, we tried very hard to help one another in every way possible. We were a very closed knit family, and nothing could separate us. We were one unit, and that made it easier to bear these inhuman conditions in the ghetto, and that is the reason that I do not recall all these bad things that happened to us, like other people do. We were together and that was the most important thing for all of us. We were together, and that helped a lot to make our sufferings easier, and not to loose our morals and our ethics.

As you probably know from other diaries, the trains were traveling very slowly from Litzmannstadt Ghetto to Auschwitz, because there was no place room for us.

Auschwitz could not handle so many people at once. They had to kill these transports, to make room for new transports and do to them, the same as they did to the previous groups.

When we got to Koluszki railroad station, we stood on the station for almost four hours, and maybe even longer. We could hear constantly, sirens and whistles and all sorts of loud noises like explosions, which made us, worry very much.

For some reason or other, I began to think that our lives were coming to an end, that they will gas us in these trains, and that they will smother this and us will be our death. I was petrified, very afraid, I tried to find all sorts of arguments, which would help me to convince myself, that my fears are not real, and they have no basis. Unfortunately instincts are stronger than logic. The sub-consciousness is much weaker then the thought, which the human intuition let's us know, or the instincts we experienced..... The vision of my fear was getting greater by each minute, and my will to live was getting stronger and stronger like never before. I kept on hiding my head wherever I could, so that I should not hear detonations of which I was so afraid. I forced myself to sleep. But when I could see the steam

from this little opening on top of the cattle car, and when the steam disappeared, one could see a fog, which made me almost lose my mind. For I had the feeling that this is the way that death looks, when they gas and smother people in the train.

Since it was in the middle of the night, it was dark all around us, and the opportunity to save ourselves, was almost null. How can you run and hide when it is dark all around you and you can't even see where you are going? Don't forget there were blackouts all over, this was still wartime. At the same time we would probably not be able to see what they were going to do to us, it was dark like in a dungeon. I was constantly sitting quietly, thinking about the same worry, which took over my mind. I did not share my fears with any of my family, I did not want to scare them, and I watched them sleeping as if nothing was happening.

When at about four in the morning the train finally started to move, my happiness was indescribable. I felt so good like never before. I felt as if I was saved from a terrible danger. And I thought of the Polish saying "A big cloud and a small rain". We people always imagine worse than it is in reality. I must admit that the bad feeling did not leave me completely. The bad feelings were still poisoning my subconscious mind, and that is why I wished that we keep on traveling all the time, so that we should not have to leave the trains, just keep on traveling. I was simply

afraid of the place of our destination, I was afraid of the future, which until now, was most of the time not a happy one for us. Just the opposite, the only thing the future used to bring us as a present were new sufferings, new persecutions and etc. Most of the people were asleep by now, occasionally, you could hear voices: "Please take away you legs, Please Mr. move, Who do you think you are? I have to suffer while you take up to much room, just wait and I will fix you!! That's how they complained constantly. The trains were packed with too many people, there was no room to move around, and that caused a lot of problems. They shoved us in like a bunch of cattle. Somebody spilled a bottle of oil, what a tragedy..... The owner discovered the empty bottle of oil early in the morning, she was lived, her anger had no end, she was carrying on as if somebody died, and it was impossible to picture her anger. There was no way for her to get over this loss. She was ranting and ranting. I could not stand it anymore I had no control over myself. I got up and went over to calm her; I tried to talk to her. I asked her whether she knows what can happen to her within the next minute? And was she sure that whatever she owns now will stay with her? And did she for a moment stop to think to where we are going to right now? At the end I wished her that this should be her only worry, and that she should never have a worse worry than this one in her life.

Our car like the rest of these cattle cars were so cramped that there was no room to breath. The stench from the pail was becoming impossible to tolerate (after a few days). Eventually people were fainting from a hunger and thirst as well as from the terrible odor. The trains were locked; there was no way of escaping this miserable journey. The little opening on top of the car was not exactly a window. Had we known in advance where they were taking us, I am sure that people would have tried to jump from the train even if it meant to die right there. What difference would it have made to be killed now, or killed in the crematorium? The end is all the same...All we would have saved was our sufferings. But the truth is that we did not know the destination, as I already said before, we were told that we are being evacuated to Germany proper, where we will all go to work like we did in Litzmannstadt Ghetto.

At five in the morning there was a lot of commotion in our car, my brother and I went to the little window and tried to see the direction of our train, however we were not able to make heads or tails. It seemed to us that they took us to the northern part of Poland. The train would stop and go, the roaring hissing of the locomotive and the constant sound of the wheels put one to sleep. But not us the unknown did not let us sleep. Our brains were busy trying to figure out the destination, we were looking for a small

town in Germany. We could not wait for the train to arrive at this place, that is what they made us believe in.

There was an undercurrent, something bothered us all. Once we left the Lodzer ghetto, we lost the sense of the little security we had left in us. However, we did not share this negative feeling with one another, we just kept it to ourselves. My brother was very quiet, and that made me very worried, all he did was look at our mother and our brother as if he tried to fill his eyes with our picture. As if he knew that from now on he will never see our mother again.

I sat quietly, I did not talk, while my mother was sleeping or just sitting looking around as if to surmise the situation. The following day she got up from her sleep and was very uneasy, she was terribly afraid, and her spirits were very low. She told us that she had a bad dream and she refused to tell us about it, she had tears in her eyes. All she wanted to do is take us around and hug us. She kept on repeating the same words all the time: "My dear children, how happy I am to be with you together. How happy I am to be with you, and that I have you here. She was the happiest person in the world, and she kept on saying that whatever happens we should be together, no matter what it will be. She was only afraid that nobody should take this happiness away from her. As if my dear mother was never happier in her life than she was right

now. I guess her intuition must have told her what was waiting for her and all of us. And as a mother like she was, she did not want to spread this terrible feeling to her beloved children.

My mother always tried to spare us in these difficult times she would rather suffer herself than cause us any sufferings. On the second day of our journey, which was the 25th of August 1944, it was a beautiful day and I spent most of it at the "window". The sun was beaming like in a desert; there was no air in the train, a beautiful August day. The children in our car were crying terribly, we all felt like crying with them. All they were asking for was water, they were thirsty, they were hot baked from the hot sun and lack of air, but nobody was able to help them. We had no water, no juice. A two-year-old baby was twisting and turning from pain, the baby was burning up from fever, it was crying its heart out. All our eyes were turned to this innocent little baby, and we were all helpless, while the baby was calling for water. Wody-Mama -Wody, these were the words that this little baby kept on asking for. You could hear how hard it was for this baby to say these words. This innocent little creature that did not harm anybody was fighting for its life. It was turning the eyes to all the people in this car asking for pity, for help, and all of us had no way to help. We were all in tears, I am sure that everybody wanted to save this baby, and yet we were helpless. Finally we all yelled out "Wasser, Wasser" but nobody answered our requests. When

the train stopped in Tanenberg, we asked the people to give us some water, nobody wanted to give any water, all they said was : "Es ist nicht erlaubt" It is not allowed, and that was all they told us.....

We were in these trains for a few days already and we did not know how much longer they would keep us here. Anyhow at the same station which was Tanenberg a train attendant called to me in a very sad voice: "Run away, run away" and then he motioned as if he wanted to break the doors open of my cattle car. As if he wanted to save me from the terrible future that was waiting for me. Unfortunately I had no choice in my future, I was doomed, and this did not depend on me. This behavior of the trainman made a very distinct impression on me. I began to think what would the future bring to us, and what did the trainman try to tell me? I had the feeling that he tried to warn me.

The train was going very fast now, without paying any attention to our wishes, the train was traveling like as if a hurricane was pushing it. That very day in the vicinity of Krolewska Huta, Katowice, some of our people in my car asked the Polaks where are we going? And the Polaks answered them: "Do nieba" which means to the sky. They all thought that this was a joke. Nobody could understand that this was the real truth; this was the real place that they were sending us to.

My fear was getting bigger and bigger with every minute and nobody could have been able to stop me from it. Before we had a chance to absorb what we saw the train started up again and continued on the hundred and hundreds of rails switching again and again from one to another, until it finally came to a stop.

At about five clocks we were getting near to our destination. Already from far you could see wired fences, barracks. In front of the barracks there were groups of women, nicely dressed. Each one wore a colored kerchief on the head, and a black apron. They looked very nice. They were waving to us, as if to greet us. Our eyes tried to find familiar faces; we realize that these were Jewish women. And finally we saw a sign, which read AUSCHWITZ, to us this, did not meant anything. My brother Lajzer quickly wrote this on a small piece of paper an he stacked it in between the boards of our wagon, just as he promised to do for Mr. Groch, when we left ghetto Lodz. And again the conductor kept on switching from rail to rail. We again saw many barracks all over, and many people in front of them waving to us. And that was the end of our journey..... I am not going to repeat of what happened after that because, I already wrote about it in the part, which is called AUSCHWITZ.

AUSCHWITZ: "Arbeit Macht Frei"

Auschwitz: A complex of three main camps.

Farmland, labor areas, an I.G. Farber factory for
Production of synthetic fuel and rubber, and
Another twelve auxiliary camps.

Auschwitz 1: Was built by the Austrians when this part of Poland
Was under Austrian rule. These were army posts and
Army barracks. There were forty-three story brick
Barracks and administrative buildings.
Auschwitz 1 is practically in tact. They once had a
Gas chamber and a crematorium

Auschwitz 2: Was built in 1942. There was a separate railway to
Birkenau to deliver the packed boxcars almost to
The camp.
This camp had four gas chambers and crematoria. It
Stood on 350 acres, and had 300 wooden barracks.
This camp was separated into many different camps,
Called in German: Lager a, b, c. They were all
Separated by high-tension electric wires, so that
One could not get from one camp to another.

When we arrived after a long journey in these boxed cars, you could see from the little window above, women dressed with kerchiefs on their heads, red aprons, standing in front of the wooden barracks. They were greeting the new transports by waving their hands. Some people say that they even heard music. It might have been a band or an orchestra playing. This was done just to confuse us and to make us believe that we had arrived in a nice place and that life would be much nicer than it was in the ghetto. This was Birkenau, and that is what we were able to see from the so-called window, or tiny spaces between the boards of these boxed cars when the train stopped.

After a short while the doors of the trains opened, and all you could hear is: "Raus, Raus, Alles Raus". There were many SS-men and these funny looking men, dressed in round caps and striped uniforms, called "passiaki". They were all over, yelling and screaming. All we could hear was "raus, raus", and none of us knew what hit us. They were yelling, and screaming at us for no reason what so ever.

There was bedlam on the station, all you could hear was: alles ausstagen, alles ausstagen, Juden Schweine raus". The SS-man was using their "Paitches". We heard them say: " Gepeck zurueck

lassen, Gepeck zurueck lassen. Schnell, schnell". They did not let us take anything of the little we had been allowed to take with us. They made us leave it all behind. All I carried was my diary, a few pictures, and my father's rabbinical ordination. And even that, they did not let me take with me.

There was so much confusion that I felt like being in hell, what's next?

There was terrible commotion and we were all exhausted from this long journey, without food, without water, and without a toilet. This was a transport of animals to be killed, not human beings, and we, of course, had no idea where we were. We had no idea that this was a Vernichtungst Lager, a Death Camp Factory.

We looked like a bunch of crazy people because we did not know what they wanted from us. There was bedlam on the station, the Jewish Capos were helping the SS, with their bestial voices: Raus, Raus, Raus. And when we wanted to take our belongings, all you could hear was: " Alles auststagen, alles aussteigen, Juden Schweine raus."

We had no idea what was happening, and again they were screaming, we did not understand why they treated us this way.

Then we heard: " Menner rechts, und Frauen links" (Men to the right and women and children to the left). The SS-men and the

funny looking Jewish men, who were hitting and beating us without a stop, for no reason at all, did all this. They were screaming "Juden Bande, schnell, schnell, aufrueken".

There was no time for us to concentrate, to put our thoughts together. All we heard was people calling to one another. They were calling out to their families and friends, whom they tried to find so they could stay together. It was bedlam. It is hard to describe what was happening. Everything was done so fast and with such speed. There was no time to think, to collect our thoughts. It was just like a snake pit, as if we were a bunch of crazy people who were just let out of an institution, who did not know how to behave. They kept on pushing us forward and forward. As we kept on walking forward together, I with my mother and my sister, I saw, one of the Jewish men dressed in the funny outfits, hitting and beating up a man that had just arrived together with us. My older brother, Lajser, tried to save this man and make peace. He told them to leave this man alone, that he was innocent, that he had not done anyone any harm. Well this was the wrong thing to do. This Jewish capo started to hit my brother. When I saw this, I ran over, and begged them to please leave my brother alone. He had only tried to help this poor man. I did not know where we were, nor did I know what was the mission of the capo. I had expected mercy from one Jew to another. The capo kept on hitting people.

After all, the SS-men were right there, and they had to show, how well they carried out their orders.

Suddenly, we saw two of our cousins, Helena and Lola Weintraub. We were all walking together with my mother. Right in front of us were the men and my two brothers were in the last row. As we continued walking forward, my brothers were still in front of us. I kept on staring at them until they disappeared. This was the last time I saw my beloved brothers, and even today, in my mind, I can still see their backs. Occasionally, they would turn around to try to find us. When Lajser spotted us, he put a finger to his lips as if to tell us to keep quiet and not say anything. We were constantly moving ahead. Little did we know that we were heading to the famous "SELECTION". From afar we could see a bunch of SS-men, but we had no idea what they were doing. We saw people going to the right and others to the left, but we did not know why.

My poor mother cried, and she said to us: "This is it, my life is finished". My sister and I kept on telling her, please we are with you together, don't worry we are together, but she did not answer us. I tried to fix her jacket and her hair, but she was not interested in it anymore, she just kept on walking and followed the crowd, as if she was going to be slaughtered like an animal. We just kept on moving forward and forward. My mother did not say anything. She was walking as if in her sleep and she seemed to

have given up her would to live. My brave mother, who was not afraid of anybody, who could go into fire and come out alive, stopped living. Her intuition must have told her something that we did not know. I remember that, when we got off the train, my mother went to the SS-man and asked him permission to take the shoes for my sister Reginka, from our packages. She was only wearing "bossiakies", summer shoes, which were all torn already. Since she spoke German well, he tried to be the goody goody, and he told her it was okay. He did not allow anyone else to retrieve things from their suitcases. On the contrary, anybody that tried to speak with this SS-man got beaten up without mercy. I guess he respected my mother's fluency in the German language. He knew very well what would eventually happen to these beautiful shoes, which were made for my sister in the Shoe Resort in the ghetto. My mother was so happy for now Reginka would have her good shoes, and would not have to be barefoot.

Finally, we approached the Selection Place. There stood this handsome angel of death, Dr. Mengele himself. Left, Right, Left, Right he kept on saying, pointing with his stick. At last it was our turn. Our mother was asked to go to the left with us. We squeezed her hand, for we were so happy to be together. However, this was the wrong thing to do. They realized that she was our

mother, and not a young woman. They recognized our joy and tore her away from us, and sent her to the right.

We were crying bitterly and we tried to see where she was going. We noticed people whom we knew from our neighborhood. We yelled to our mother as loud as we could. Kochana Mamusiu, Kochana Mamusiu, Dear Mother, Dear Mother stay and try to be together with these women which you know, especially stay together with Mrs. Newman and take care of yourself. Make sure you should not work too hard. We will see you soon. Don't worry. We love you. Reginka and I cried without a stop. Our mother did not even look at us anymore; she must have felt that her end was near. She walked like a person who is walking towards the execution. My sister and I continued yelling and waving, until we lost sight of her.

The SS-man who walked next to us told us not to cry. He told us that our mother was with the older people and that she would not have to work so hard. He did all this because he thought that Reginka was not Jewish. "Du bist nicht Jude, he said". Was machst Du hier"? He thought that because Reginka had the most beautiful red hair, and the most beautiful big brown eyes, she could not be Jewish, because that is how German girls looked.

So we believed him, and thought maybe that is true, at least our mother would not have to work so hard, and that satisfied our temporary worries.

We walked and walked and walked. The Jewish capos kept on scaring us. We really did not know anything about this place. We asked them about our mothers, about our backpacks, about this place, and this is what they answered us: "Whatever you have now, they will take away from you too. You will be left with nothing".

All this did not make sense to us. Who in his right mind could picture such hell? We were bewildered. We did not understand anything. We had never seen anything like that. So we just kept on moving forwards and forward like human robots. When we passed this tremendous swimming pool, we threw in our watches and our rings, and whatever we still possessed that was of any value. We just did not want to hand it over personally to anybody, especially to the SS, to the NAZIS.

Finally we approached this big red building. There were lots of people and we had to wait for them to make room for us. We asked some of the people where are we going and they all told us: "Oh don't worry, you are going to take a shower". We were told to leave the shoes outside. This never took place.

Reginka still had her shoes in her hand. When we got into the building there capos, SS-man, SS-women, they were all very busy. Get undressed they said leave everything on the floor, just get undressed.

They made an announcement that if anybody refused to listen to their orders, they would be shot on the spot.

My sister and I did as we were told just like hundreds of other Jewish women did, and we kept on moving forward.

On our right were the fat Jewish capos; they looked us over while we tried to hide our nakedness. They looked us over as if we were a piece of meat at a butcher shop. We were young innocent girls and we were not used to being treated like this. They were looking us over like pimps, while we stood there ashamed, trying to cover our bodies with our hands. We did not know what to do.

One of them came over to me and said in Jewish: "Wilst sein mein Schatz"? And that if I did, he would give me everything, and he would take good care of me.

I already knew from the ghetto what "Schatz" meant. This was nothing new to me, and I certainly would never agree to be somebody's concubine, somebody's mistress, and somebody's prostitute. I did not answer him. I kept on moving forward with my sister by my side.

Then he said to me in Jewish: " Die weist wi do bist?" Do you know where you are? Here they roast you and they burn you. I thought that he was crazy. And again I kept on moving until I came in front of an SS-lady. She took an electric hand-shaver and started cutting my beautiful hair from the top to the bottom until I had no hair left on my head, just like they used to do to the new recruits in the army. I had no idea how I looked because there were no mirrors and all this was done within a split of a second. Next was Reginka's turn.

We still did not understand why they were doing this to us. What was the purpose of shaving off our hair? Everything was strange and nothing made any sense. When the SS-lady was finished cutting Reginka's hair, we did not recognize each other. It was just luck that we stood next to each other, for we both looked like we were just out of a mental institution. Then came inspection where they looked and examined every part of our bodies. They looked into our mouths, into our armpits, into our vagina, into our rectums. We had no idea what they were looking for, and then they made an announcement. They told us that if they found any jewelry or money, they would shoot us. My sister and I had nothing to fear. We had no jewelry or money anymore. They had already taken everything away from us when we got off the train and the little

we had, we had already thrown into the pool on our way to this inspection room.

Finally, they gave us some rags to cover our naked bodies. I got a navy shmata dress that was so tight on me that I could hardly move around in it. Reginka got a long, black gabardine, button down dress, much too big for her size. All the dresses had a red painted stripe in the back.

After this demeaning procedure they kept on pushing us forward, and if we were not fast enough for them, right away they would beat you up.

Finally they made us go outside the building. By then it was late at night, it was dark and there were practically no lights and we could not even see our way to walk. It was so dark, that all I could think was the plague in Egypt, complete darkness.

We had no shoes, and we were not used walk on the cold hard and freezing earth mixed with pebbles all over. Our feet were not used to these sharp pebbles, which made our feet bleed.

One could not complain. You just had to accept what was given to you and move on. And so, our nightmare was underway.

As we know today, this was Birkenau which is called by the Poles Brzezinka, which is located in the valley of the mountains, about two miles from the famous concentration camp "Auschwitz". And even though this was the end of August 1944, which was still summer, the nights here were very cold, almost freezing like in the middle of winter.

We walked, and walked, and walked and all we could see in the dark were wooden barracks and very tall fences. We still did not know where we were, and what this was all about.

At last we approached this very long barrack and they opened the door. This barrack was empty. In the middle, there were bricks that ran from one end to the other. On each side, there were three tiers of wooden planks. They told us to form groups of five because each tier was to occupy five persons. Don't ask me where there was room for five people. I think that in a prison there is more space allowed per person than they did here.

Then came a Jewish Block Aelteste, Jewish Stubendiensts. We were all bewildered about this. What were they going to do to us? There was nobody to talk to, nobody to help. All we heard was "Halt die Schnautze, Weist du wo du bist"? Keep your mouth closed. Do you know where you are? We were all confused. It did

not make sense to us. What did they want from us? What was this place all about, and what were they going to do to us?

At this moment I thought of the Lodzer ghetto where the conditions were awful, but in comparison to this place, it was gold. In fact I said to my sister that if anything like this was possible in the twentieth century, then the "Yitziath Mitzraim", the story about the Jews in Egypt must be true. The things that happened to us from the time that we left the Lodzer ghetto till now, was an unbelievable story, a nightmare, and yet it happened to us Jews. And then, they told us to be quiet, and go to sleep. Who could sleep after the experience we had that day? This was hell on earth. We had come from a terrible ghetto, where people were dying from starvation and sickness, but we still had a life, some dignity.

Here we were in hell. They had taken away our mother, our two dear brothers; they had left us naked, without anything. We did not know what to expect from one moment to the next. We wondered and worried about our mother and brothers. What were they going to do to them? Why had they taken everything away from us? We had arrived with only a backpack, an even that they had taken from us. We had brought with us a few small items, none of which had any material value. They were just personal things that were only

meaningful to us, and even this they took away from us. What was this place after all? We could not understand anything anymore and we were truly bewildered and frightened.

The bunk beds were made of unfinished wooden boards, full of splinters. They were called priches. My sister and I chose the top; we felt that we are better off on top than underneath. We were squeezed five to each bunk bed, in other words 15 to one side. Imagine no windows in the summer no heat in the winter, how could people survive in this place, not even not even in the Lodzer Ghetto did we live under these circumstances. We were all bewildered... We asked ourselves what's next? But nobody was willing to explain this wearied place, and what was going to happen to us.

We had no choice in this matter just had to wait for the day to come around and see for ourselves where we were and what this is all about.

My sister and I did not sleep that night, and I am sure that none of us slept that night. We were just lying there with our eyes closed. So much happened to us since we got out of those horrible trains, we just did not know, everything happened so fast there was no time to think. We were just like poisoned robots, just kept on moving and moving on.

While lying on those hard boards full of splinters, we kept on thinking about our dear mother, where was she taken away? And does she manage all by herself with out her children?

What happened to our brothers are they together? Did they too have to go through this horrible routine as we did? And where are they? Maybe we could see our mother and brothers tomorrow?

No answers just wishful thinking, thinking, thinking and hoping for what was dear to us, for something we wanted so much and that is to be together no matter what the circumstances were, as long as we could be together like we were in the ghetto.

Lying there on these wooden boards all night long and dreaming and praying to

G-D, That He should reunite us soon; for that this is the only way a family can survive even the worst times.

When morning came around we could first see that in the middle of the barrack there was a long brick divider, which run from one end to another. In front were the quarters for the Blockelterste, Who was in charge of the Stubendienste and of course us the Heftlinge. On the other side was the room for the Stubendienste. What a

hierarchy, these were Jewish girls from Chechoslovakia and Hungary, soon I found out what they were capable of.

As soon as the sun came out, the Stubendiensts came out in the middle of the block on top of the bricks, screaming: Aufstehen, aufstehen! Schnell, schnell. They pushed us out in front of the barrack, and if you were not fast enough, they would smack you across the face or kick you wherever they wanted. "Zaehl Appell, Zaehl Appell", which meant count everyone.

We understood the German, but did not understand what they wanted from us. The air was still very cold and we were freezing. It was very early in the morning and the sun had not yet warmed up the air. Auschwitz was located in the mountains, where the mornings and nights are freezing. Then they told us that we should form the same fives as we did last night. From now on, we were instructed to remain always in these groups of five. So we formed lines, just the way they told us to. For those who did not follow their orders fast enough, the Nazis began to beat mercilessly.

On one of such occasions I asked the Stubendienst why they were doing this to us. After all, the SS-man was not there watching. I asked why they were hitting their own Jewish "sisters"? I reminded them that we were all Jewish sisters and asked if she had a heart. She told me to keep my mouth shut or she would beat me so

that I would not be able to move. She told me that if that happened I would surely never forget her. This was my first encounter with our Jewish ladies, who treated us like the SS did. This was a perfect lesson for me to keep my mouth shut. When the whistle blew, it was time for Zaehl Appell, where the SS-man came to count us, which took quiet a while. After all, the number of people at Appel had to equal the number of women they admitted to this C-Lager, and other Lagers in the Birkenau vicinity. We stood there for a very long time, and we had to stand at complete attention, in absolute silence, sometimes for hours. Eventually, there was another whistle to mark the end of Zael Appel. Many times, instead of the whistle there were sirens. Then came time for breakfast. They brought a big barrel of black coffee. They called it coffee, but really it was dirty, colored water, which they poured into a big pot. This big pot was to go around to be shared by the famous " five" that we formed. For supper, we also got one big pot for the five of us again. In this pot, they served "soup", which really was a pot of water with some odd, little things, floating in it. I did not refuse to drink the coffee, nor did I want the soup. How could I drink after so many people had their mouths in it? After all, they did not give us cups, bowls or utensils. We all had to drink from the same pot. So for a few days I went around hungry and thirsty, but when my strength was giving up, I too gave up. It was very hard for me to

share the same pot with the other five girls. At home I never ate or drank from the same glass, not even from my beloved family. But here, I was forced to give up my cleanliness. I found out on my own, that if you are really hungry, you forget about your principles and you will eat anything. If I had not done so, I would surely have starved. As it was the little "food" they gave us was hardly enough to survive. Every place we looked, there were the high tension electrically wired tall fences, which separated the different camps. We did not understand why this was necessary. It all looked like an insane institution. Especially the women, with their shaved heads dressed in rags, looked like patients in an asylum. This place was a snake pit, and we were all very confused in the midst of it. As each day wore on, so did the heat. In the same way we froze in the evenings, the heat during the day was unbearable. The sun was burning like in the desert, and we had no place to hide. There was no place to wash us. The toilet was like a public latrine. One long barrack with big holes on each side. I have never seen anything like it. If you spent more time than they allotted to take care of your bathroom needs, the Stubendienst of the toilet, or as I should rather say latrine, would come over to you and hit you with her leather "paich" strap. She was the meanest Jewish girl I had ever met. She had red hair with a mean look on her face. People said that she was the daughter of a Slovakian Rabbi. So if you were not quick enough,

she almost murdered you. We had never come across Jewish girls treating other Jewish girls in this fashion.

After about a week being in Auschwitz, I got sick and was afraid to admit it. I had the runs, and could not control it, so I could not stay there. I went to the Block Aelteste and told her that I wanted to go the infirmary. There was no room at the infirmary or as they called it the Ambulance, of the C-Lager. They asked one of the Stubendiests to escort me to the Ambulance in the adjacent B-Lager. Tall high voltage electric wires around it surrounded this lager, like all others. We came to the infirmary, which consisted of a small barrack with a few rooms and the same planks as in the barracks where I slept. In these barracks, there were two tiers, instead of three. When the doctor came to examine me I could not believe my eyes. It was our beloved Dr. Ginsberg from Lodz. What are you doing here? She asked me. Why did you come here? Don't you know where you are? She asked me. No, I said. I am here only a few days. Listen, she said: " I will try to cure you, and as soon as you feel better I will send you back, and in the future stay away from the infirmary. It is a very dangerous place to be. Don't ever let them know that you are sick? Try to stay healthy even if you have to fake it." Then came the SS-man to check the sick, or I should rather say to see whom he could get rid of. He pointed at me. "What is wrong with her?" he asked. Dr.Ginsburg

told him that I would only be there for a day or two, that I was really quite healthy. After he left she told me that I had to get better fast. I spent three days there and I did get better. Before I left the infirmary, Dr.Ginsburg told me to go to the adjacent room and pick out some shoes for myself. I walked into the room. The room was full of people lying on boards. These were sick patients who looked as if they had already met their deaths. Their bodies were skin and bones, and their eyes looked as if they were ready to jump out their sockets. I was so scared I did not know where to turn. I wished I could help them, but there was nothing I could do for them anymore. They were so near death that they could not even talk. They were just staring without any expression. I often wonder what they were thinking about, what were their last wishes, and if they were dreaming of someone to help them. I did not know what to do. I knew that Dr.Ginsberg wanted me out of this place, which meant that if I wanted to survive and I knew that I had to heed her advice. In the room there was a heap of shoes. I was afraid to look through and so I took the first pair that I could find and reported back to Dr.Ginsburg. As she was signing me out, the SS-man came again on his rounds to inspect the sick." What's with her", he asked again. "Oh! She is leaving right now, she is fine."

He went on his rounds and left the infirmary. Dr. Ginsburg signed me out, and called for someone to take me back to C Lager. I

thanked her and wished that we both should meet again after the war, in Lodz. She had saved my life.

On my way back, I spoke with this woman, who was Jewish too. She was from Chechoslovakia, and she told me that she had already been in Auschwitz for many years. She had watched the concentration camp being built. She told me that now things were so much better than they were before. Can you imagine anything worse than I had witnessed up till now? It was impossible to imagine. This was truly a living hell.

When I got back to my barrack 19, and met my dear sister, she cried like a baby. She did not believe that I would ever come back. She said that everybody told her that whoever went to the "ambulance", never comes back alive. We kissed and hugged, and everybody was very happy to see me. I told Reginka about Dr. Ginsburg, who saved my life, and I said to myself that if we survived this war, I would do something to show the doctor my appreciation. Well, let me tell you, that when I returned to Lodz in August of 1945, I found out that Dr. Ginsburg came back to Lodz. When she found out that nobody survived from her family, just like mine, she committed suicide. She jumped from the window. I am convinced that the fact that nobody survived in her family plus her terrible experience in Auschwitz was too much for her to

bear. And because of that I never got my chance to show her my appreciation for what she did for me in Auschwitz, and for what she did for my beloved brother Lajzer when he was sick with TB in the Lodzer ghetto. She was a wonderful doctor and a wonderful human being.

Twice a day we stood Zaehl Appel, and twice a day our Jewish Stubendiensts found a way to get their frustrations out on us, no matter what we tried to tell them. In the evening or late at night, when we were ordered to stay on our planks, we would hear male voices coming from the front of the Stubens. They were laughing and giggling, just having "a good time". On the left front of our barrack was the room for the Aelteste of our block. To the right were the rooms for the Stubendiensts. We had to keep quiet. We were not allowed to talk, while they were having the time of their life. They were oblivious to everything that was going on around them. They were enjoying themselves.

Every morning when we had a few minutes time, when they left us alone for a short while, we tried to talk to the people in the adjacent camp. We asked them where they came from, and they told us that they were from Kielce and Kielce surroundings. Reginka and I thought that maybe our maid Ida might be there, so we asked the people whether there were people from Staszow, and they told us

that there were. We begged them to find out whether there was an IDA BULWA. We told them that we would come back tomorrow to the same place to find out. When we came to our appointed place the next day, these people told us that she was not among them.

We were constantly looking and asking for our brothers and the rest of the family, but we found nobody. Our cousin Helena Weintraub, who was with us in the same barrack together with her sister Lola, made contact with a French man who used to bring her a piece of bread every day as he worked in the kitchen. They did not bother with us. They were with Lola's sister in-law and her single sister, who had been a classmate of mine. We were very sensitive about it, and felt bad about it. They were much older than us and we expected a little feeling. But this was Auschwitz, and there was little place for family ties. Everybody was busy with himself or herself. Fortunately, I had my beloved sister and that had to be enough for me. We had each other. Life was miserable in Auschwitz.

One day, they told us to line up in fives and walk towards the gates of the camp. When we got there, they opened the gates, and we had to walk on the road between the two camps. We motioned to the watchman who sat with his machine gun, high up in the watchtower, "Where are they taking us"? And he motioned back,

pointing to the sky". And even then, we did not believe that we were walking to the crematorium, to be killed. Suddenly we heard a voice: "Alles zurueck", alles zurueck", so we turned around and back we went, oblivious to what was going on, we just walked, and walked, like robots, we turned back. They opened the electric gates for us, and we were back in C Lager. They told us to go back to our individual barracks, which we did. This happened to us twice. I suppose the gas chambers were full, and there was no room for us. Twice, we were spared from death due to the overcrowding of the gas chambers. There was more pain and suffering in store for us. Everybody in Auschwitz had a number tattooed on their arm because they were selected for work. Our Lodzer group never got the tattoos, as we were condemned to die. Therefore, they never bothered to give us numbers. Most of us, did meet our deaths there at Auschwitz. And that is how our days were spent in Auschwitz.

One day, when we were going to the latrine, we saw a young woman on the electric wires. She looked like a dancer. Reginka went over to see, and she discovered that the woman was my brother Lajzer's friend. I do not remember her first name, but her last name was Kuperman. We were devastated. We knew that there were other people who committed suicide, but we knew her so well. She was a nice, beautiful, young girl. What a waste.

My sister Reginka was determined to do something. She insisted that she was going to find some work. Every day she would wait for the most beautiful SS-woman in Auschwitz, Freulein Greiser. She was also the cruelest and most vicious killer. One day, she finally caught up with her. Freulein Greiser had the most beautiful blond hair piled up in a German upsweep. She was dressed in a pale blue sport shirt and matching skirt. She wore black gloves and inside the gloves she had some kind of iron gadget that when she hit a Heftling (a slave), they would die immediately from the blow. Where Reginka took the guts to speak to her, I do not know. Believe it or not she did not touch my sister. "What do you want?" she asked her. And Reginka in her most tactful way told her that she would like to work. Miss Greiser told her to come the following day to the same place and that she would assign her to a job. She told her that since she volunteered and was so anxious to work, she would find her work that would be okay for her. Can you imagine that this murderer spoke to my sister like a human being? Nobody had the guts to go near her, and yet my sister had no fear, and was going to get a job in Auschwitz. A job meant a possibility of staying alive. In the meantime, we continued on, with our ragged clothing, and our shaved heads. At times, I could not even recognize my own sister. The whole place looked like something out of a horror story.

This all happened beginning in September 1944, when the Nazis were determined to kill all the remaining Jews. They did not want to leave any witnesses to their "Death Machinery". The Russians were advancing towards the west and the Germans were losing their victorious battle. Once more they called us out on a special "Appell Platz", but this time they told us to undress, so that they could choose their victims. We already knew what was waiting for us. We were very disillusioned. Nothing mattered anymore. We had become fatalists; whatever they would do with us, we wanted them to do it already, and put us out of our misery. Our nerves were running out. And yet, we were anxious to stay alive. At this Platz I met a girl from school, Anka Haft. She was there with her two sisters, and she was from a different barrack. I think she was from block 22. We were very happy to meet, and we made up that we would form a five, so that we could be together all the time. We did not know the people from our block that joined us in our famous five. And since this was a new selection, we were happy to be with people we knew so well from home. Suddenly a little Stubendienst from their block came over to them and told them something. I asked my friend Anka Haft what she told her. She refused to tell me. I begged her to tell me so that we could save ourselves, too, but she refused. Slowly, the three sisters walked away from our group, and returned to block 22, and left my sister and me alone. We had to search right away for another three to

make up our group of five. These were the regulations in Auschwitz. I was beside myself. This was the second time Anka played me dirty. The first time was in the ghetto when Anka revealed to the headmistress of the high school gymnasium that I had been accepted due to some help from my cousins, who were teachers in the school. They were helping me by tutoring me so that I would be prepared. I shared all of this knowledge with my friend, Anka. When she attempted to be accepted to the same gymnasium, she was told that she was not accepted. Because she "ratted" on me, I was forced to leave school, which was very devastating to me. But this time, she had betrayed me when it was a matter of life and death. What kind of a friend was she and how could she have done this to me? In 1948, I met Anka Haft's sister in New York, and she told me that all three of them survived, while I was left alone without my sister, without anyone. My beloved sister could have survived, had Anka been kind enough to help us. This time when we got to this Platz, there were quiet a number of SS- men. They told us to get undressed, and each of us had to go through inspection again. They checked our faces and bodies for any blemishes, and when they did not find anything they told us to get dressed. I was petrified. I was afraid for my sister because she was very young and not developed yet. She was flat cheated like a board, she had no breasts yet. How was I going to save her, for I could see that this was not like the time

before when they were going to take us to the gas chamber. There were rumors that this was a selection for work. If you were very young looking, they assumed you were not capable of hard labor and they were apt to kill you. Anyhow, I had to think fast. What would I do when Reginka's turn came and she undressed? The Nazis would see that she was still a child. At that moment, I decided that I would lie, and would make myself older, and told Reginka to say that she was eighteen. I had no problem. They looked me over and of course gave me an "okay". Then it was Reginka's turn. Somehow, she went through. They asked for her age and she told them that she was eighteen, and they accepted her too. What a miracle! I was very careful not to show any happiness. We did not kiss, nor hug. We stood there motionless. We already had the unfortunate experience with our beloved mother. Then they gave us numbers to memorize. They told us that from now on, this would be our ID number. I got number 30165, and Reginka got number 30165. The entire group was put up in two separate barracks. We could not go out. We were quarantined. In our barrack we met our cousin Hanka Flatto, and the two other cousins Helena and Lola Weintraub. They were taking our names and we decided that we should all register under the Flatto name. They refused. Instead, they registered under Weintraub, because her sister-in-law registered under Rosenberg and they wanted to be together. (These two families were related) hey kept us in these barracks for two days.

After two days, they called the names from A - L. They took us to the showers, where we had to wait for hours in the burning sun until there was room in the showers for us. We had no fears. We did not yet know that there were so called showers where they gassed people, but even if we did, we were so down, that we would not resist anything. While standing to go into the showers, some women and girls came over to my sister and said: "Hey! You are here too? Rumkowski did not save you?" Everybody knew that Reginka was Rumkowski's messenger. They could not understand what she was doing here. I told them to leave her alone. I insisted that she was my sister, but they insisted that she was an orphan from Rumkowski's orphanage. Anyhow, after standing around for many hours in the merciless baking sun, we finally entered the shower building. We were without fear, and so glad to finally have the opportunity, for the first time since we left home, to wash our dirty bodies, which we could not stand anymore. The shower was a blessing from G-D. We felt human again, and did not know how long it would be before we would shower again. After the showers they gave us "new" old shmates to cover our naked bodies. We wore no panties, no brasseries, and no shoes. We had no combs, no mirrors, and maybe it was better that we could not see ourselves in a mirror. It was enough to look at each other to know how we ourselves looked. They made us stand for hours in the burning sun

before they loaded us into the boxed cars again, and this time they told us that they were transporting us again. But never did they give us the name of our destination.

There we were again, about eighty girls or women to one car. And this is how we left, soon after Rosh-Hashana, this famous place called Auschwitz, this famous death factory, Dante's Hell. We left without knowing where they were taking us too. We were starving, nervous, weak, and tired from all the things they did to us in this indescribable hell, that nobody could really picture. For no human being is capable of such inhuman bestiality and torture, which only the Germans were capable of. I often think about it. How could such a civilized, cultured people stoop so low? Even an animal would have taken pity on us. What happened to them to allow them to treat us as such? How could they gas millions of innocent men, women, and children, simply because they were Jewish? Well, we did not feel bad to leave Auschwitz at all, because no other place could be worse than this.

After Auschwitz there was nothing to fear. What could happen to us? If they chose to kill us, I thought then that death would have been our salvation. For how much suffering could we take? So, we were very happy to leave this burning inferno, and hoped that we could ride these trains forever and ever. At least in these crowded, filthy, moving trains, without toilets, nobody

would bother us. As long as the trains were in motion we felt safe. These boxed cars were locked, and SS-men were in their own private compartments, having a good time. This was the end of my stay in Auschwitz. When the train started to move, we prayed that the train would never stop. We were afraid to lose our sanity. Here in these trains, without food, without water, without any possible way to take care of our human needs, nobody bothered us. We were locked in, and we had no means of escape. Even if we had been able to run away, it would not have done us any good. If anybody would find us, either they would kill us, or if the Poles would find us they would bring us to the SS. So there was no choice. We had to stay and wait for our destiny. The girls made me sing the famous Polish song about the trains, and I did that many times during our "Journeys". Was delighted to have my beloved sister with me, for that was all I had left from my entire family, and we loved each other very much.

BERGEN/BELSEN 1944

It was time to say good-bye to Auschwitz, thank G-d I guess no other place could be as bad as this. When we got into the trains, they gave us a few pieces of bread and that had to last us until we were to reach the new destination. In my car the majority of the girls were young, and almost all were from Lodz.

This was a little different than when they shoved us into the trains, on the station in Lodz. Although these were the same awful cattle cars, at least there was enough room to stretch our legs at night, and that was a great luxury for us. Although we all missed our parents and siblings, we still did not know the real truth about what happened to them; therefore we were telling each other stories just to pass the time.

We reminisced about our good times in Lodz before the war. We talked about our beloved families and that made us feel, as if we were all one family, for we all shared the same misery.

And finally I was asked to sing the famous Polish song about the trains, which went like this: "Przez cale moje smutne zycie,
JA mieszkam na malej stacyjce

I w ciaglym pociagu zgrzycie, uplywa mi moje
zycie

Pociagi to nigdy nie staja, to nigdy nikt nie
wysiada

Tu tylko mak sprzedawaja, kiedy pociagi
stawaja

Oh! swist lokomotiw, i td, i td.

Translation: During my whole sad life, I live on this small
station and during the constant sound, that is how my life is
going the trains never stop here, nobody ever gets off here. They
only are selling moon flowers, when the train stops. Oh! the sound
of locomotives etc.

Another song that I had to sing was "Maly BIALY DOMEK" Which was a
song about a white house, that a girl keeps on dreaming about. A
house where she spent such wonderful good days and where she was
so happy.

While we were traveling in these boxed cars, the people with me
always made me sing these two songs. It seems to me today that the
songs had a soothing impression on them. I guess these were
familiar songs that reminded them of the good times at home, when
we had nothing to worry about. And I think that when we used to
sing these songs at home we really did not understand the sad
message that they tried to tell.

The journey took quiet a while and of course, we had no idea where
we were going. Whenever we asked the SS-man where we were going,
we received no answer. Naturally we had no say in this matter, and

whatever the SS had in store for us, that was that. After being in Auschwitz, there was nothing that could scare us anymore.

Auschwitz was hell! It was a place that no human being could imagine, nor could we understand why or for what purpose was such a place created.

The Lodzer ghetto was a terrible place, there was famine, there was starvation, sickness, however, and there was still some human dignity. We still had a home even if it was a small room for an entire family. Even though there was hardly any room to move around, at least we had some semblance of privacy. We were not herded like a bunch of cattle, and we could do whatever we wished behind our four walls. This was not so in Auschwitz. Auschwitz was a death factory. Auschwitz was a high skilled, up to date, calculated death factory. In Auschwitz, time was never wasted, nor was cyclone gas. Everything was calculated to ensure that as many Jews as possible would be murdered with the least amount of expense and waste. So, as I already explained, we were very happy to leave this place. We could not picture another place like this. Little did we know that the Germans had many such concentration camps, Vernichtungs-Lagers all over Poland and Germany. The train was traveling at a constant speed all the time, not like the train from Ghetto-Lodz to Auschwitz, and we would not have minded if it continued to travel forever.

Suddenly in the middle of the night the train stopped... They opened the doors, and we were asked to jump down, and form our famous fives again. Then a different bunch of SS-men took over the command of our group. They spoke the same language, not German. I mean their way of speaking to us, of hitting us, yelling at us. Aufruecken, aufruecken, aufruecken, aufruecke. "Move up. Move up" they shouted. Juden Bande, Juden Misthaufen. "You bunch of Jews. You Jewish excrement". At that moment I thought to myself, what is going on in this different place? Why are they just as mean to us as those SS-men in Auschwitz? I was pretty naive. I did not realize that they all went to the same school, that they were all graduates of Hitler's teachings, Hitler's famous hate of the Jews. It was pitch dark, the middle of the night, and we were all barefoot. We had no stockings, no panties, just an old shmata over our body. And that is how they ordered us to walk, and walk very fast, for a long time.

Eventually we came to a place that looked to us like a forest. It was very dark at night and we could not make out where we were. As we got closer to the place, we noticed a few tents. We had absolutely no idea where we were, or where they were taking us. They told us to enter the tent, and go to sleep. We did not understand what they meant for us to do, for there were no beds, there were no blankets. There was only a bare grass floor, just like you find in a field. What were we to do? What was our choice?

What were we to do stand up all night long? We had no choice and we were tired from the trains. We were thirsty and of course, hungry. So the only thing left for us to do was to lie down on this moist, cold soil, and hope that we would fall asleep. How long we slept is everybody's guess. If I remember well, we were about two hundred fifty girls or women in one tent. When we got up in the morning, and walked out of the tent, we saw two other tents, just like ours. This was the month of October and the days were still nice, while the nights were terribly cold. So we took advantage of the sun, and we wished the sun would dry out our damp bodies from this wet and cold earth on which we had slept.

The first few days were not bad. They pretty much left us alone. There was this old SS man, who gave us two soups on Yom Kippur. Reginka and I did not eat that day. We told our friends to eat their soup and one of ours. All we asked them was to save us at least one soup, which we wanted to eat after the fast. We all know that the Germans did this on purpose. They knew very well that this is a fast day, but that is how the Germans tried to break our spirits.

On the day of Yom Kippur we went to the tent on the hill. There was a girl from Lodz who recited some of the prayers and sung some of the well-known Holiday Songs, or I should rather say Psalms. We tried very hard not to forget who we were, and this way we kept our spirits up.

One day came an order for all of us to assemble in one of the tents. We were told that they were going to ship us to Switzerland. We had to fill out an application. We were given blankets, and we were extremely happy that we were chosen to be exchanged for whomever they wanted, as long as we would be able to be rid of the Germans.

Well, this joy that we felt did not last long for they revoked this order and they told us to return to our respective tents, and that was the end of our short lasting happiness. A few day later, they took us for a walk. We had no idea where they were taking us. When we approached this building, we saw men planting flowers, working in the garden. To me, some of the men looked Jewish, and I asked them in Hebrew: "Am Who"? Are you one of us, we asked them? Yes, they answered me in Hebrew; there are more of us. We were very happy to get this good news. They could not hold long conversations with us. They were being watched by the SS-men, so we pretended, as if we did not say anything.

The Germans took us inside the building and told us to get undressed, and finally told us the good news that we were going into the showers. This would have been a real treat for us as we were very dirty and hadn't had a shower for months. After the showers, they walked us back into the "camp" to the tents, and we all felt refreshed.

The only running water was at one of the water pumps in the middle of the field, not far from the interned camp, which was behind the barbed wire fence. Occasionally, when nobody watched us we would speak to these people. And they told us that they were interned through the Red Cross. If one of the SS-man would see us we would make believe that we came to get a drink of water.

All was well until the SS-man Kramer appeared on the horizon. He came from Auschwitz, and he started their routine again. We had to stand on Zahl Appel, the roll call that could last for many, long, cruel hours. He also had many other grueling plans for us. In the mean time, there came a transport of Jewish women from the work camp from Bomblitz. They were a mixture of young girls from Lodz and other parts of Poland. They were all put into tents right across from ours. The camp Aelteste, or the camp elder, who was the Jewish woman placed in charge of the Jewish prisoners, was the mother of my friend Lily, who came from Luxemburg. They too came from the Lodzer Ghetto.

Then we met our cousin Hanka, about which we were so very happy, for she was more like a sister to us. Then came the question of what to do. Should we go over to her tent or should she come over to our tent. Hanka did not want to change, and my sister and I did not know what to do. Had Hanka insisted that we should all be together, and then we would have done it, after all she was older

than we. And since she did not want to tell us anything, she too was afraid to make a move and none of us knew where we were going, so we left well alone. Hanka went with her transport and we went with ours. Today I know that had we gone with her, my sister would have been alive, and we would not have to work as hard as we did in this deadly ammunition factory, where our tent landed up. But that was our faith. That was our miserable future, and the choice was ours. SS-man Kramer made our lives miserable. Thank G-d that there was an order for the ammunition factory in Elsnig\Elbe. The nights in the tents were getting worse all the time. While lying on the ground we could hear detonations and we could even feel tremors under us.

I was afraid that we might get sick, so I took one of the threadbare blankets that the Germans finally bestowed upon us, and I cut it in half. Then I cut each in the middle so it could fit over our heads. These were like vests under our shmata dresses. The other blanket, Reginka and I used to cover our bodies at night. Reginka was very afraid that the SS would discover what I did, as we wore these torn blankets all the time, under our shmata dresses. If not for these we might have frozen to death. But I felt that I had nothing to lose, otherwise we both would have been sick, and that would have been worse. We also were given a white thick napkin to use as a kerchief. I took one and used it to cover our bread rations.

One day they asked us to assemble on the field. They told us that we would be leaving Bergen\Belsen, and going to an ammunition factory. They gave us the famous "Passiaki", the striped cotton coats, and bread for the journey, which again lasted a few days. They shoved us into the boxed cars again en route to a new place, once again. We left behind the blanket and one of the napkins. Nobody counted anything. Nobody asked any questions, and that is how we left Bergen\Belsen. The only good thing was that these vests that I made for Reginka and me saved our lives as it kept us warm during the terrible winter which we had in the southern part of Saxony, not far from Leipzig, Torgau. So this is a short story about our stay in Bergen\Belsen which became a Venichtungs Lager after we left.

ELSNIG\ELBE 1944-1945

ELSNIG\ELBE was a small concentration camp, it did not have a crematorium, but it had other ways to torture Jews. This was already towards the end of 1944 and Germany was not anymore the victorious country it has been throughout the entire World War Two. Things were changing rapidly and we surely were made to pay for it. As the Germans were losing the war, they made us suffer even more, as if we were responsible for their losses.

Anyhow, let me tell you a little about our camp, so you will be able to picture us in it.

The camp was surrounded with electrical high tension fences, like all other concentration camps whether they were in Poland or any other country in Europe.

In front of the camp were the German quarters which faced the outside and the inside of the camp, so that the SS would have a good view of what is going on in both sides of the camp location.

The huge gates lead to the entrance of the camp. As you walked into the camp on your left was the laundry building, next to it was a shower room with a few showerheads in it.

To the right was the "RIVIR" which we would call the INFIRMARY.

In the center was the Appel Platz, around which stood the barracks. There were two rows of barracks which were called Blocks, they held between a 100-150 people.

Smack in the center was Cyla Keonigsberg's barrack number one. To the left was Henia Horowitz's barrack number two. Behind barrack number one was Helenka's

barrack number three. To the right was barrack number four, and behind this barrack, on the extreme right was a "Stubá" small room where about 15-20 girls lived, and the same on the left. Then came Saba Koenigsber's barrack number five, (which was my barrack) to the right was barrack number six.

The windows of our barrack faced on one side, the inside of the camp, and the other side they faced the electric wired fence towards the outside of the camp.

Reginka's and my beds were in the last row, next to the window that faced the outside of the camp. It was so close to the electric fence that if you were to stretch your arm while the window was open you could actually touch the electric fence, and you know what would have happened to us if we did so.

On our to and from the ammunitions factory we use to see many POW S, they were of different nationalities. I hoped that if the war should come to an end, maybe these POWS would save us, they saw how bad we were treated.

I would also wish, that somebody would appear in front of our window, so that I could speak to the person and find out what was going on in the world.

These were only wishes, nobody ever came these windows. These were my dreams for hitch I prayed, and which never came true.

And now, I would like to describe our life in camp and in the factory. The cruel sadistic, violent, sheer madness and delivery of painful blows to us the poor Jewish slaves.

It is four in the morning. Outside is still night, the rain is falling as if the sky was emptying all the water on us, it is very cold, very, very cold and very quiet..... Suddenly, I hear a whistle and then the well-known words: “ Aufstehen. Aufstehen, and then the bass voice of our block leader Saba Koeningsberg : “Wychodzic, Wychodzic”. And then we would hear our Block Elterste calling, get up fast, fast, schnell, schnell.

These words broke our happy hours of our sweet sleep , which we so badly needed. Most of us tried not to hear these words, for we just went to sleep a few hours ago. Must we get up again? Can't we stay in our bunks a little longer? At least a few minutes? But was no joke, we better get up right away otherwise Fraulein Aufseherin will appear and she will yell, beat us and kick without mercy. So I had no choice, I jumped out of bed and run to the outhouse. There were very long lines and I had to wait my next, before I was able to relief myself.

Then I run to the washroom to wash up. The washroom consisted of two wooden walls, and a roof. In the middle were some faucets with cold water . The cold water felt like ice it woke me up from my sweet sleep, I washed my face and whatever else I could, then I run back to my barrack to wake up my beloved sister.

This was not so simple, I had to wake her many times, poor girl needed to sleep and I could not let her sleep, because she would get into trouble. I practically pooled her out of bed, makes sure she got dressed, then I made the beds. The beds had to be made in a special way, otherwise they would punish us, and we would have to stand on the Appel

Platz for hours. It did not matter whether there was snow or rain, we had to pay for whatever they felt like punishing us with.

Then I run to the dinning room to get some black coffee, or I should rather say black water. And while I drank the horrible coffee there was another whistle, and again I could hear: “ Alles raus, alles raus” “Everybody out, everybody out”.

I returned to my block took my sister and we run to the infirmary, for this was the place where our commando used to assemble.

Dressed in the “Passiaks” which were this like paper, and the shoes that had holes, and were tied to our thins legs with cords so that they should not fall off.

My sister and I kept on running in the dark, stepping into the mud and paddles of water, our feet got wet and sometimes even frozen from the frost. Finally we joined the 350 Jewish slaves or I should say “ Meczenic Israela” , the Jewish Slaves,the Victims of this this terrible war.

Nobody cared about us, the world was silent while we were being mistreated and killed by the Nazis.

Sometimes I had the feeling that the Anti-Semites were very happy to see what was being done to us, the Nazis were doing their dirty work.

Trembling from cold we joined the long lines of our commando, waiting for the rest of the girls.

Then it got very tight, everybody was running to the front, nobody wanted to be at the end . We knew that being at the end meant running instead of walking . We were too

weak to catch up with the rest of the group. If you did not run the ladies and the men in the green uniforms would keep on hitting and kicking you, so we tried to avoid this situation. We did not want to be the victims.

Quietly without a word I held my sister's arm, both of us were practically frozen, stood there.

All you could hear was: "let's go already, let's go already, we can hardly stand on our feet, we are weak and hungry, how long must we stand here in this freezing weather?"

Then you could hear people say: "Can't they wake us up a little later? Why must we suffer so much?"

We were looking for justice, we forgot that this too was a part of Nazi policies, to freeze our bodies and our minds.

Without any patience we were waiting for the light to go on the "Wachstube" of our Oberfuhrerin, the "Ksantypa in the body of Venus Freulein Schmeiser.

About four forty-five, the big door opened and the famous madam of life and death appeared in front of the awaiting "Muzulman". She started to count from the front to the back, from the back to the front. Then she checked the individual commandos, all that took sometime.

And while Freulein Schmeiser was busy checking, many women were fainting,

They fell to the ground, and all you could hear is calling Ala, Ala fast, somebody fainted.

Ala was the infirmiry nurse she tried very hard to get these women to the infirmiry to revive them.

What that meant was that we needed new people to replace the sick once.

All that had to be done in fifteen minutes, because the commando had leave camp at five o'clock. You can imagine what commotion went on in these fifteen minutes.

Finally came the minute we all waited for, the lights went on and the gates opened, and the well-known words: Los nach vorne, Schnell nach vorne”.

I walked close to my sister, I hugged her hand so we should be together all the time.

Schneller, los weiter, aufgehen, aufrucken, that ‘s what you heard the Aufseherin yell all the time.

The commando was very quiet, we were walking without saying one word, and it was as if we were following a funeral, but that was not enough for our Aufseherins

They had to follow their orders, here they gave a kick, and there they hit somebody with their “Pitche”. Innocent girls were being hit for no reason whatsoever.

And when they dared to ask why, the answer was:” Halt die Schnauze”. After all they had to get rid of their sadistic impulses, their bestial characters which they learned from their Hitler education.

All the time you would hear SS men:” aufrucken, aufgehen, los weiter, weiter”, with this went a pocke here and there with their rifle.

I walked quietly next to my sister and made sure that I was in line with my fives.

I felt so good, I wished that we would keep on walking all the time. This was the best opportunity I had to be with my thoughts about my beloved family all the time.

Automatically I kept on marching on forward thinking only about my dear family.

The bright light from the houses that we were passing interrupted my sweet thoughts.

We passed these villas every day, they were not too far from our camp. The bright lights

And the beautiful curtains in the windows, just like we had at home, our beautiful home which was filled with love and sunshine and warmth.

I very much wished to be back home with my family, to lay down on our new sofa, and rest my aching body.

I looked at these windows, and could not believe that I too had a home like that, that I was once a person too, that I had a name, a mother, father and brothers, that Haftling Number 30165 is Hanka Flatto and no one else.

In moments like these I could not help wanting the warm and pale face of my father, the always busy and loving mother, for the bright and kind face of my brother Lajzer, of the always smiling eyes of my brother Chaim, and my lovely red sister Reginka who was at my side. I missed them all very much.

I was hoping and dreaming to be with them again, just like it was before the war. I kept on asking myself: "Do you really have to forget about them?" Are you asking for too much? Are these wishes of as they say in Polish "Wishes cut off head"

And then suddenly another light appeared and brought me back to reality. The light of "Hell" went on, and in minute I would become a part of a machine, a machine which was like a lion's mouth, this was the face of death.

With a big effort I dragged my tired feet which were pulling my wooden shoes. The door of the Dante Hell closed behind us, and we went into the center of the liches, which drew our last drops of blood. Quietly without a word we went to our commando places, to begin our work, and start all over again.

Originally Reginka and I worked at a table. We were installing electric wires in some grenades called Drei Coma Siben. This was pretty easy job, we sat at the table and did not have to work hard. However, this did not last very long. The girls in building 805 who were doing transport, could not stand the fact that I had an easy job. They went to the German Foreman and told him that I was healthy and that he should take me away from the table to do transport which he did.

So they took me to load the grenades and to transport them, I could hardly lift them, I had a lot of trouble lifting them, they were very heavy. And then I had to pull this heavy wagon to unload these grenades. I had no choice in this matter I was not going to snitch on them and get them into trouble. They were not the nicest girls, these were not girls from Lodz, and these girls have been in various camps for years. These girls were very tough and selfish, they were very jealous of us, because we spent the war years in the Lodzer ghetto, while they were in concentration camps. They did not realize that the Lodzer ghetto was not exactly a picnic, that people died there by the thousands from hunger and hard work.

As luck would have it, one of the foreladies in this building was a girl from Lodz, she liked me very much and she asked the German Foreman to give me a job at her table. Because of this intervention I was elected to work at the electric boring machine. This was not an easy job, but I still preferred this job to doing transport.

Franka Leherer the forelady was very nice to me, this made my life easier. Even the German Foreman was nice to me, maybe because Franka and I spoke a fluent German, while the others did not.

Franka even showed me the secret place where she used to wash her hair. She would fetch a pail of hot water and take me there to the hiding place, where nobody could see or know it existed. Every time I was able to wash my hair and my body with hot water, I felt as if I was reborn, for I could never do this in our camp. Eventually I showed my sister the place and she too was able to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity.

Working at this machine was pretty dangerous. I had no glasses to protect my eyes, from the ammunition powder. The purpose of my job was to bore the excess of ammunition from the inside of the grenade which was called the Flack Spreng Grenade.

So one day I had an accident, some of the ammunition powder fell into my eye. And it caused a terrible infection. I could not go to work, my eye was full of puss. There was no medication to cure this infection. The doctor in the infirmary could not help me, the puss kept on running and running. My face was swollen, and the eye was not getting any better.

My poor sister felt very bad, she did not know how to help me. Believe it or not she got the nerve and she approached the Lady of "Life and Death". The Venus of Hell Freulein Schmeiser. She told her what happened to me at the factory, and she asked her whether I could see an eye doctor someplace.

Freulein Schmeiser listened to Reginka and told the camp commandant Mr. Clarke about me. Clarke sent for me, they brought me in front of his window and he asked me : "Was hast du dort? Schau mir das Auge" Was fur Dreck ist dass? And then they took me back to camp. After a few days they called me again, two SS-men with rifles ready to shoot walked me to the factory to see the German doctor. The doctor was pretty civil, he did not mistreat me. He examined my eye, he assumed that I do not understand German, and he said in German: Oh she has Glaucoma. I almost felt like crying for I knew what glaucoma was.

Anyhow, he gave me medication, and the SS-men walked me back to camp with the rifles pointed at me all the time, so that I would not run away.

I took care of my eye for about a week and to my disbelief my eye got better in spite of the the doctor's diagnoses. When my eye was cured I returned to work in the factory.

At that moment I feel We worked very hard without a stop, however the German workers had to stop for lunch, so they gathered us into the dinning room .

This was a great thing for us, they gave us a bowl of soup if one could call it so, it was water but at least it was hot, sometimes they would smuggle a real bowl of soup.

We worked very long hours, we were weak and tired , our energy was giving up, but we had to meet the quota, otherwise we would be punished. And every time when we met the quota, they would increase our production, which we had to meet in order to survive. We had no choice, we were like robots, we had to produce or

they would send us to a real concentration camp and cremate us like they did with the rest of the Jews.

The reason they still left us alive was because our work helped them to continue the war.

So when the day came to an end we knew that we would be returning to camp and on our way home we would always meet the other shift, the 12-hour shift.

We could hardly walk home, and the SS would do the same trick and make us walk faster and faster, they had no pity on us even though they saw how hard we worked all day and night.

I just want to add that when the weather got a little milder, the girls who worked on my shift would sing the famous Jewish song as they were approaching our camp. An here are the words to this song:” Ich fur a heim, Ich fur a heim , Ich will schon mer nicht sein kein ger, veil Ich fur a heim Ich fur a heim.”

The SS did not understand the words, and they just let them sing this song, thinking that we are happy to return to camp.

When we got home we had to line up for soup, that did not always materialize, but when it did we were very happy to get something warm to help our hungry stomach.

Many times there were big surprises waiting for us, like the one when they made us stand on the Appel Platz for hours, when they cut the girls hair into a cross.

Poor girl I don't remember what they accused off. Another time

They accused a women from block number two of steeling a piece of bread from another person. This was not even true. Out of shame the poor woman went onto the electric

fence and committed suicide. They say that her husband survived the war and was waiting for her return.

The SS always found something to punish us, either the Appel Platz or they would refuse to give us bread or soup. But the worse was when they put us into the bunker, imagine 350 women in this narrow bunker. And then, think of a German Shephard running wild, back and forth in this narrow bunker, barking, and biting. Whatever part of the body he could get. This was a nightmare, there was no light, no place to run, the bunker was locked. People were screaming, crying. We were lost, and there was nobody to help us, what a sight? I don't recall how long they kept us in this bunker, but whatever it was it was too long, it was the pits.....

Other things that were on the agenda was to fill the trenches with sand or stones or vice versa. This procedure took hours whether rain or snow it made no difference. And most of the time this was done on our day off on Sunday. I remember one Sunday when they would let individual blocks stand on Appel Platz in bitter freezing rain for hours. We did not even feel our feet, our fingers, our bodies were numb from this cold. The SS would be in their rooms looking at us, singing, smiling, we were their entertainment why not.

When January 1945 came along life was getting much harder for us, we did not know the reason, but that's when Germany was losing the war. And that was the beginning of our trouble, not that we had it easy before. This was the period when they began to unload their frustration on us even more so than before.

We tried very hard to survive, and hope that tomorrow would be better. In my block we really helped each other, we were the girls from the Lodzer ghetto, and we still had family feelings for one another. In fact Tecia Olsher would invite us to her “Stuba” and recite poems or talk about famous books. So that Sunday when we were able to have a free hour or two, she would help us to keep up our moral and not to lose our human dignity completely. After all the purpose of the Nazis was not only to drain every drop of our blood, but also to dehumanize us to make us into animals.

The few hours with Tecia Olsher made us feel as if we were one big family, and gave us something good to think about. It took us away from our misery for a few hours, this was like medicine for us, a blessing. Tecia Olsher wanted to give us moral support and make us feel a little human. She wanted us to remember better times and hope that tomorrow will be better.

REVOLUTION IN CAMP :

The head director Mr. Kast
Is working in the factory during the entire war
Who during all these years
He substitutes the world for the prisoners
World--- Wasag--- Work -- Granate
The superior commander is of the opinion that
Only work makes life sweet.
Only work all night and all day
So that you will add to the German Reich's glory
That food provision is a small matter
That the main thing is organization
That the gas is favorable to us, and so is the ammunition powder too
That our work is constantly developing (growing)
That in spite of the constant air raid alarms
The production is always high
Because even though the grenades are big or small
They multiply the factory production and add to the German glory
It's "Quatch" what the local P.O.W. say
The Germans must win this war.
And that from the end to the beginning
Everything is in order in this factory.
In spite of all these laws
According to the statement by Her director Mr. Kast (who asserts)
Like Wapnitz and Winkler
Eulitz, Bigel and Polter

Like Meister Stein proves

And Meister Tiler, Meister Hajn

Meister Von Soltman, Meister Krieger

Miester Von Wurtzman and Reringer

Irmish, Scheffler and Ritz are beat ing their brains out

Whether there us nothing missing in the factory?

Salt is constantly arriving and the Anbau is pouring

Everybody is working, nobody is fainting

And from dirty volgar Jewish race group

It would be nice and good and fein

Still to add another large elevetor for work

And on the base of the Sprengstoff mas (ammunition powder)

To get the new boilers and other parts

A carusel elevetor, Ajensow and cylinders

An to see proudly, whether sometimes

Together with the Entwicklungscollonie tests (Evelopment Laboratory)

The factory in spite intensive work

And cration of a new press

Orders, investigations suitable instructions

Does not have to double his production

Then Krieger combines and thinks

What else can we do in the factory?

One hundred developments every day, he broke poured

And he touched and he looked and checked very carefully,

And soon he disclosed to us his conclusion

Always Rid, Pour ! Whether you want or not

Because the production standard is already double

But she has to be three times higher.

And suddenly, one time and not from here
Mr. Krieger receive an invitation to the front.
And Mr. Krieger entangled himself in the Panzer whirl of war
And his name is now Schtachtmeister Panzergranadier.
And now look what Wapnitz wants
What the factory will give you, what Winkler knows
Rampmeister Stein, the chief Mr. Hajn
And high commander Klein.
When must the prisoner even though he has no sleep and exhausted
In spite of pain and hunger and lack of energy
In spite that the Ammunition powder strangles and is chocking her throat
She wants to eat, but to work she must go
The matter is clear, there is no doubt
This is life's point of distress
The director Kast complained
That discipline has relaxed
Now pay good attention, and guide yourself accordingly
Listen, who is lazy, you know well
Listen, the one who does not produce
Will for sure have the commission from Buchenwald
Will receive a half portion of the food provision
The Lageraelteste calls right away here and there
The day shift and the sick people's apple
And she prepares an exact plan
What, why and how and when?
After that he personally looked over the number
And each sick person the Chef himself looked over
He checked the sick list, he made crosses,

A fall, Blue?

Sick? Move, Get away ! Up!

Although he still gave the order

The full food portion for the sick is forbidden

And those even those that will return from the day shift

Will also receive only a half of food provision

Mr. Wapnitz gave out packages

And in these packages, the working girls

Found soap powder, a cap, and a small piece of bread

And a piece of salami and one German Mark

So that they could buy a cream and a small mirror

In the store factory at work

So right away they brought new grenades:

Like: Flagsprenggranates, and Panzerkannone

And Drei komme Sieben (3.7) gold and red

And perspire the aus and the loading colony

And the prase and massa and tremendous tempo

The callers, those that pour the ammunition,

Those that stir the ammunition, the press machine

And the ramp and penalty, and wagons, and rails

And corks, and buksy, and papers and screws

And factories, and wagons,lehrery and pupki

And funnels and bottles to warm

And sztift and bottles and bowls and pour !

Because what is the borring machine if not to pour?

Ah trifle, a play a children's play

And Receiving table, and Eighthundred three

And Borroom and Air-protection and Small- Coimmission

And the Entrance-room and the Work-Shelter and Gross-Production

And the Instructors, and Magazines, and Warehouses

And the forelady and locksmith place

And electric, celluloid, and work

And further and losses and tempo and release

And windfall, breakfast, and pauses

And tales, and story telling and lies and nerves

The "Erzatzes" want to work in the factory steady

They work--- Prima !

And Wapnitz hotheaded promises

That on Friday and Thursday

The factory will give the prisoners, soap powder on ration

In the mean time we are awaiting a big ovation

The Neo-German_Plutocrazia

It throws us a conclusive password

That from today

Work you must

But eat not !

TECIA OLSZER

The press machines

Revolucje na lagrze.

Der Hauptdirektor der Herr Kaszt.

Pracuje całej wojny czas na werku
który przez dyler lat -

Heflingom zastępuje świat

Welt-Wasag. Werk - Geschos Granat.

Herr Oberschat jest zdania iż.

Nur Arbeit macht das Leben Süß.

Nur arbeiten przez noc, dzień cały
by deitschen Reich przysporzyć chwały.

Ze kto kleknie aprowizacja -

Ze ground to jest organizacja

Ze gas nam sprzyja, Sprengstoff sprzyja

Ze Werk nasz ciągle się rozwija

Ciągle alarmy są, und doch

Die Produktion steht immer hoch.

Bowiem Geschosy duże i małe

Zwieszkają werku i Piemiec chwale.

S'is Quatsch co wokół mówią tu jeńcy.

Den Krieg gewinnen müssen Piemcy.

I że do końca od początku.

Przyszko na Perku jest w porządku.

A jednak mimo owych prawdach

jak dwierdzi Herr Direktor Kaszt.

Zgodnie z Kapitanem i Winklerem,

Eulierzem Biglem i Follerem

Jak dawadnia Meister Schein'
y Meister Tiler, Meister Hajn
Meister von Soldman, Meister Krüger
Meister von Kurtzman and Peninger, (Peninger)
Glowi sie Yrmisz, Schafler i Friede
Czy w werku nie brakuje nic?
Sól wiaz nadchodzic, Ausbau leje,
Przysey praca, nikt nie mdleje
In Misthaufen judenbanderasy
Bystoby nett und gut und fein,
Yenerse duse windydat do prasy,
Y na podstawie Sprengstoffmasy,
Rajnowczyh kotlow i spikulcow,
Karusel wind. Ajdensow walcow
Y wiedlic gründlich, cy czasami
Rarem z Entwicklungsschlone próbami,
Perk mimo intensywniej pracy,
Y ukonienia drugiej prasy.
Rozkazow, badan, idan, instrukcji
Nie musi zdwoic swej produkcji
Piec Krüger combieniert und klein,
Was kann man machen noch in Perk? -
Hundert prob täglich vorbijat i lat
Y macat i patrat i sprawdzaat genau.
Y wnet wyjawil nam wnioski swe:
Yimmer los! Güssen! - dcese cy nie
Bo norma wprowadzie jest już zdwojona,
Abet sie muss sein, potrojona.

Und plötzlich auf ein mal ni zowad ni stad
Dostal Herr Krueger Verladung na front.
I wplatal sie Krueger w Krieg pancerny wir
I zowie sie Schächtmaster Panzergranadier

A Heras spojz co Wapnick chce,
Co Werk ci da, co Winkler wie.
Rampmeister Stein, der Oberman Hahn
Und Oberschaffführer Klein.
Wen munn Heflung trotz nie mu wyuencsenia,
Trotz glodu, bólu, i zmęczenia,
Trotz dem ze Sprengstoff dlawi dusi,
Chce jesc - dann gehen uns Werk musi.
Die sache ist klar, sie steht offen und breit
Das ist Lebensnotwendigkeit.

Hat sich beschwert Direktor Käst,
Das Disziplin hat nachgelast!
Heute war schon wieder bei Arbeit ein Krach;
Past mal gut auf! Und richt' euch danach!
Hört wen ist faul, ihr wüß' ja bescheid,
Hört wer macht keine Produktion.
Hat bestimmt Kommission von Buchenwald,
Gebem Verpflegungs halbe Portion.
Die Lagerälteste ruft bald hin her
Tageschiedt und Schonungskranke apd -
I przygot dohladny plan
was? warum? wieso? wen? wann?
Potem te lixby pörseendlich megladat
I Kardz chora Herr Schef selbst ogladat.

Sprawdzał Schonungi Kniżyki kładł,
Ein Umfah? blau!

Krank? Weist! Weck! Ap!

Albowiem nadat rozkaz wydany
Voll Wicht dla chorych jest zakazany!
Ci zasłowa von Tageschicht.

Tatze dostanę halbes i wikt.

Herr Wapnitz rozdał Packetchen
A w tych Packetchen die Arbeitmädchen,
Znalasły mydło, pulwer, orzechy,
Brodchen pakase matę kromeczkę,
sre en kiełbasy, wraz z jedną marchką
by mogły kupić krem i lustereczko.

narzwała w Ładendach werkowych.

Podano natychmiast do rąk kul nowych;

Wie: Flachsprenggranate, i Panzerkanone,

y drei, komma sieben (3, 7) - zoldaczerwone,

y poć się aus i verladungkolone

y prasa i masa, i demper szalone

Ruberki, giserki, i mäschen, frasz maszynny

y rampa i kara wagonu i szyny

y korki i bukisy, papiery i srułki

y werki i wuski, lehrerzy i pupki

y lejki i blaszki nastawiać i grzać

y sztyfty i flaszki i miska i lać!

Bo czym bory maszyna i czym gis maszyna?

A dy, fraska i graska, zabawka dziecienna.

ĩ Abname des, ĩ Acht hundert zwei
ĩ Ausschub ĩ Vorschub ĩ Acht hundert drei
ĩ Borraum ĩ Luftschutz ĩ Kleinproduktion
ĩ Vorraum ĩ Verkschutz ĩ Großproduktion.

ĩ Anweisungsinnen, Magazyn ĩ składowa,
ĩ Aufregerinnen ĩ Schlossverwandschaft
Elektricität, Celulozid = Wolk

Y weiter ĩ locker ĩ tempo ĩ loß!

Y gratki, smádomie, ĩ pausy ĩ przerwy,

Y bajki, bajanie ĩ budy ĩ nerwy!

Erzähle hier w werku pracować na stale
Man arbeitet — Prima!

Y Wapniak w zapale solennie pnyneka,

zł w piątki ĩ czwartki

Werk wyda heftlingom, Haßschpulver — na kartki.

Ulagne nas wieka nas wielka owacja

Deutschesseoswska neoplutokracja,

Rzucca nam wnioske haslo,

że od dziś

Arbeiten muß man!

Aber essen nicht!

TECIA
ULSZER
/.

APRIL 13, 1945-APRIL 20, 1945

*Ever since I last saw my sister, the same picture is in front of me all the time, as if it just happened yesterday. I can see her entering the barrack wearing the skirt, which I made for her, I see her wearing the yellow sweater. She looked so nice, and it gave me pleasure that I was able to make this outfit for her. She looked much better in this outfit than in this long heavy gabardine dress, which she got in Auschwitz when we were leaving for Bergen\Belsen. *

A few motns later Saba our Block Leader got some clothing to give out to the people whose clothes needed to be replaced. I took my sister's skirt and I asked Saba to exchange it for another skirt. I was lucky, for she did not check this skirt. This was not a skirt. I cut my dress in half and made it look like a skirt. So I got a "new" skirt for my sister. The one she gave me was a nice blue plaid skirt made out of thin wool. Who knew who was the owner of this skirt before? Who knew who wore this pretty skirt before the Nazis killed her? These clothes were distributed in March of 1945, just a few weeks before they deported us from our camp in Elsnig\Elbe.

The winter was not over yet. Reginka and I still wore our vests, which I made out of the blankets, which they gave us in Bergen\Belsen.

Berge\Belsen. The vest shielded us from the terrible winter of 1945, till the spring of 1945.

And then as if somebody switched the T.V. channel, I see another picture, which follows me around, the railroad station in Neu Seddin or Neu Settin, near Potsdam. And I feel as if the bombing of our transport train took only yesterday.

This picture is so vivid in my mind, and it never leaves me, and it will be there all my life, because this the day when I lost my last remnant of my beloved family. I lost my beloved sister Reginka, who was my biggest treasure.

As I wrote many times before ,even though I was less aggressive than Reginka, I always had the urge to run away. And whenever we were walking to work or on our way home from the factory, I always was ready to run into the woods. Reginka would not want to hear about it. I was willing to do it on my own, but was afraid to talk my sister into it. When four girls in our wagon decide to escape asked my sister if she would be willing to join them but she refused, and I was not going to go without her. This was not like Reginka, she was by far more daring than I and yet each time I asked to run away she always refused. Today when I look back, I still cannot understand why, Reginka who was the outgoing one, Reginka who was the spokesman for me and others, Reginka who was

not afraid of anybody, should not be willing to escape? That is one thing I can never understand. Why was she never willing to run away? Yes I realize that there was always this danger that if we did run away the SS would shoot us, but this was the only chance we had available to us. She had a tremendous fear of air raids, every time the sirens sounded we were happy to go down to the shelters. While we were happy to have some rest from the hard work in the factory, my sister, she would suddenly stop talking she was very sad and kept to herself.

I often think that maybe she had a premonition that that's how her life would end?

I can still hear the famous story told by my friend in our train just to pass time and to keep the people quiet. She told the story of Les Miserables by Victor Hugo especially the story how Jan Van who run away. This story was an inspiration for the four girls in our train to run away, after all we did not have much to loose.

The rest of the girls in our train did not like this idea they said that they would not let them do it. This started a whole commotion, they were afraid that if the SS would find out that some of the girls run away they would shoot us. They started to fight among themselves and said that they would not let them flea

they were not going to risk their lives for the four willing to jump out of this little window.

I was very upset, what right did they have to stop these four girls to take a chance to save their lives? So I spoke out on their behalf. I became very instrumental in making the girls understand that whoever wants to run away has the right to do so, and we have no right to stop them. For some reason or other my argument prevailed and when the night came around the four girls run away. They lifted each other so that they could reach this small narrow opening and than each one of them jumped down.

Thank G-d that these girls escaped because the following day in the early morning our transport of 750 women was bombed, of which maybe seventy-five girls survived. From the eighty girls in my car only three survived and that includes me already. These girls that escaped from our train survived the war, and they missed this terrible bombardment. Thank G-d that they do not have to live with my experience of April 20, 1945.

APRIL 13-APRIL 20, 1945

April 13, 1945 came, as did all other days before, when they would wake us up in the middle of the night to go to work. And as always

they would tell us that, there is black coffee in the " dinning room" if we wish to drink it. Then they made us stand on Appel, to get ready for our march to the amunition factory "WASSAG". These were wasted hours, another way how to tire us out and make sure that we should not get our sleep, which we so badly needed. We stood there for hours. Tired, hungry, weak from the hard work that we did in the amunition factory. We were waiting for our Freulein Schmeiser. In the meantime people were fainting, and we needed substitutes to take their place. After all the commando had to be full, otherwise we would have to stand there for more hours to complete the 365 women which completed the shift.

Finally one could see the first signs of daylight, and Miss Schmeiser appeared, counting us up and down, down and up, all to make us more miserable.

And then came the moment we all waited for, the SS joined us and we heard the order: Lose, Nach vorne, Auftreten, march! schnell!. So we started to walk, and walk with our last strength, and made sure to keep up with our "fives" and the rest of the group. Nobody wanted to get hit by the SS-women or our SS-men.

As usually we passed the private houses, all lit up with fancy chandeliers and curtains. We wondered whether we would ever be able to have a home, just a simple home. A clean bed with white linen sheets quilts to cover ourselves, just like we used to have

at home before the war. And as we walked we dreamed of the times that when we were in our happy homes. All of us stirred at these windows, just to think: here are people living a happy normal life as if there is no war, while we who live just around the corner, live in a concentration camp fenced in with electric wires. We were practically naked, barefoot no food, no sleep, no family, all they made us do is work, work, work. How could this be possible? Don't they see us walk early in the morning or late at night? We had two shifts, one was going to work, while the other was returning from work, six days a week. But nobody said anything and nobody did anything for us, as if we were invisible. They were oblivious to our problem we were not important to them, we did not exist.

We the commando of 365 women walking everyday to and from the factory did not exist, nobody saw us, nobody knew what was done to us.

So on April 13, 1945 just like any other previous days we got to the factory, and went immediately to our individual buildings and to our ammunition machines. After a few hours one of our foreladies called the Leherer girl, and me she told us to go to the place where we storaged the grenades. She ordered us to make believe that we cleaning the "Ausbus" of the grenades, which meant to clean the excess amunition powder. And while we made

believe that we are working, she told us that the Russians are not far from here, and it looks as if the war is coming to an end. She told us that the Germans are loosing the war, and she told us that all she wished for is that the Americans should come to this part of Germany and not the Russians. She asked us to be good to her, after all she said she does not have to tell us all that, but she likes us and for us suddenly what happened before and that she wishes us well.

We returned to our "posts", our work places elated and very happy, but could not show our happiness. How we all waited for this moment. Only we knew how we dreamed that our wishes should come true, and here it was finally. In the meantime my sister Reginka came and told me that the old Mrs. Mueller gave her milk and bread. This she did only the last week, she felt sorry for my sister, who was one of the youngest "Heftlings" slave laborers. Reginka also told me that she heard rumors that we will not be working at this amunition factory anymore.

Soon an order came to clean up, and that we are to return to camp, by then it was already getting dark. We cleaned up our "stations" and got ready for our march home.

While walking home to camp, I had the urge to run away again. But Reginka who was never afraid of anybody would not hear about my

wish. I would not do it without her. This was only my fantasy, dreaming of freedom, dreaming of the end of the war, dreaming of joining the rest of our family. And now that I was already told about the Germans loosing the war my hopes were were almost real.

When we got to the camp we saw that the other shift never left for work they ere very surprised so early and wanted to know what happened. We had no clear answers for them, other that the war is coming to an end. Suddenly came an order from the Oberschaftfuehrer Clarke to assemble on the Zael Appel Platz.

When all of us got there the commandant, the great SS commandant spoke to us: "He started to tell us how he cares for us, how he is like a father to us, and how he wants to save us. This place he said will be the front and he is afraid that they would kill us. And since he feels like the father of his children, that is why he ordered the trains to take us away to a safer place. He continued in his German language: "Eigentlich Kan Ich Euch here lassen, aber Ihr wird nicht ueberleben ein Kriegs Front", and he went on and on. And we the stupid Jews believed him, like the Jews of the Lodzer Ghetto believed Chaim Rumkowski and Bibow.

I cannot describe the urge I had not to go, I wanted to hide under a bed, in the toilet, just someplace. But in my heart I knew that my sister would not agree to it. And how could I do this without

her. How could I hide without my beloved Reginka, so reluctantly I joined the rest of the commando? My usual fives were Fela, Tosia, Zosia, Reginka and I but the "Malchamovet" came to me.

My Jewish

Forelady who also had two sisters asked me to go with them, these were the Lehrer sisters from Lodz. Unfortunately I agreed to this change, and that is when my tragedy my new tragedy began.

The trains arrived, they gave us some bread, no water, nothing for the way just hard dry bread. We thought that this journey would only take a few hours, all they promised is to take us deeper into Germany. Little did we know that the Russians were on the East and the British and Americans were on the West. There were not too many places they could take us to. In reality instead of a few hours we were in the trains for several days, there was no place for us to go. These trains were not passenger trains, with normal compartments like normal people travel on. These were cattle trains with a little opening on the top. These trains were used to transport Jews to concentrations camps to transport Jews to their death. So on April 13, 1945 they packed 80 women to one car, there was not enough room to sit down, even more so to stretch out for the night. They locked the cars and we had no way of getting out we were watched by the SS-men and SS-women, who were accompanying

our transport. None of them were inside the car with us they had their passenger car attached to our transport.

Because of lack of space, we slept in shifts. Slept if you can call it sleep. Some of us stretched out at night, while the others were allowed to sit up during the day and "sleep" on these rough wooden floors. Of course the more aggressive women slept at night, and others like my sister and myself slept during the day. We happened to sit near the Leherer sisters, who were very aggressive, as well as the two Kosher sisters, who were not very nice to us. We had no choice there was no other alternative.

The first day, was not too bad, for we thought that it will not take long and we will reach the destination, but this was not the case. It was April and the days were very hot, imagine the mere fact that 80 women were packed into this car like sardines. Not only was there no room to sit, it was even difficult to breath. The trains stopped many times. There was no place for us to go there was a lot of confusion. We heard the SS-men talk but could not make out what they were saying, and of course they would not tell us the truth. They would not let us loose, give us a chance to survive this war. There was no toilet, no water, we were dying of heat and thirst. Only once in the seven days did they allow us to get out of the train, so we could take care of our fisical needs. Today I cannot conceive how this was possible.

And finally we got word from one car to another that some women died, and that we should yell and ask for water. So we did "Wasser", "Wasser" we yelled, which means water, water please. Nobody listened to us, nobody bothered to bring us water, and till today I do not understand or know how we survived seven days in these boxed and lacked cars, without any means of surviving. Today I know that their plan was to kill us probably by starvation, why waste a bullet on these Jews, They knew very well how to do their job well. Anyhow, everybody was hungry, thirsty and very nervous, so we decided to tell some stories.

Marilka volunteered to tell the story of "Les Misarables" by Victor Hugo, and that kept the people quiet for a nice few hours. This story, however, gave some of our girls an idea to run away. Four of the girls decided to leave the car at night. So during the day we were trying out. How some of us will stand and help them to reach the small opening on top and how they will jump out of this small window, it surely was not easy it a lot of practice. This caused a lot of trouble in our car. Most people did not want to let them run away. They were afraid that if the SS should come to count us, and they would find them missing, they will kill the rest of us. I spoke up for them, I said that whoever wants to leave has the right to do so, we have no right to stop them. There

were lots of discussions and lots of fights, but I felt very strong about this, they had the right to run away.

I asked Reginka to join them, but she would not hear about it, and I would not go without her, I would never leave her behind. I can still hear the last girl say: "Hanka Flatto are you coming with us", and this is always with me. How much I wish that Reginka would have joined them that night, and she would be here with me today to tell this story like I do.

All this they were able to do, because the SS used to leave these lacked-up boxed trains, and go across to the woods where they would sleep in their sleeping bags.

This part was told to me by one of the four girls that run away. They jumped from the window in the deep of the night. They went under the trains, and on their stomachs and on all their fours they got to the end of the trains. Then they slowly came to the forest, and walked towards the village. They walked close to the buildings so that nobody should see them. Suddenly they heard somebody speak Polish ,and some other foreign language. They got inside the building and told the people what happened to them. According to what they told me they could not remain there and had to hide, and that is how much I know as of now.

THE BOMBING OF OUR TRANSPORT IN THE CLOSED TRAINS ON APRIL 20,
1945

On April 20, 1945, which was Hitler's birthday we knew that something terrible is bound to happen, we were very afraid, but had no choice other than wait in these locked trains. So early in the morning we took turns to stand one on top of another to look from this so called, window. To our amazement we saw long silver strings coming down from the sky. Little did we know that these strings were a forepost of American and British planes.

The place where our transport stood was according to some of the girls a railway station in Potsdam near Berlin. The station was loaded with lots of explosive materials, so that the Germans should be prepared in case of an attack. The SS switched our trains closer to the explosives, next to the oil storage, that was to make sure that in case of an air raid we should go up in fire and not be able to survive.

Every time there was an air-raid sirens the SS run into the woods, and left us standing there to be doomed. So it was that on Hitler's birthday, down came the planes and bombed the station together with our transport. Reginka and I were sleeping, because we did not sleep at night. I heard a terrible noise which woke me up, there was obviously an explosion. When I opened my eyes I

could not see anything. It was pitch black, darkness all around me, and then there was fire all around me. Before I could turn around the car had no roof, no walls just a bare floor. People were screaming and yelling, people stepped all over us I had no idea what was happening. Right away called for my sister, but there was now answer. I kept on calling her name, but Reginka did not answer. In fact I heard someone say: "All she cares is Reginka, Reginka, that's all she has in her mind Reginka who cares, stop calling her, are you crazy?" And suddenly, there was daylight again the car was full of death people.

I jumped out of the train, and took a few steps, I called my sister's name again hoping that she would be among the people who jumped from the train. Maybe she saved herself, but nobody answered my calling. I looked around but my sister was no place to be seen. So I climbed back into the train, I called my sister's name again, but there was no answer, and by then the car was in shamble. The darkness disappeared and I was able to see. I started to look for my sister among those that were left death in my wagon. Finally I found her among the other girls that were left there death, I dragged her out of the train, I honestly do not know how I was able to do this. And as I did this, I noticed that there was something wrong with her left foot, but there was no

time to examine her. Things were terrible, the bombs were falling, there was fire everywhere.

I had to think fast what to do next. First I sat with her near our train and held her in my arms for a few minutes. Then I realized that this was too dangerous, I must find a safer place. So I dragged her further and further away from the trains. And again I held her in my arms, hoping that she would talk to me. Then I started to check her out and that's when I saw that her left foot was hanging on a hair, all cut off, and blood was oozing from her foot. I did not know what to do, I checked her body, again and again, but found no other injury. I checked her heart there were no other cuts. I licked her face, hoping that maybe this way she would wake up and talk to me. Her eyes were open her body was warm but she did not say a word. I called her name all the time, I kissed her face her hands but she did not move nor respond to anything that I tried to get her to move. I massaged her heart, but there was no reaction I was helpless.

Then I called out to the people who were running away from the trains, begging them to help me. Nobody paid any attention to my begging. Nobody was willing to give me a hand so I could carry my sister to a safe place. Everybody was running to save their own lives, even those that were not wounded refused to help me.

Suddenly the words of my father were ringing in my ear, these were the words he told us on September 5, 1939. He said that in the event that we should have to run away from Lodz, we should not keep on looking for each other but keep on trying to get to a safe place. Eventually we will get together again otherwise none of us will stand a chance to survive. In fact that's what exactly happened to the people who tried to run away from Lodz in the beginning of September 1939. The Germans were shooting the people on the highway while they were running away to save their lives.

And that was when I decide to sit her down, and lean on something, until I would find somebody to help me, or to bring a doctor for her. It never entered my mind that I would never return to her, or that I would never see her again. So I started to walk, the place looked like a war-front. There were dead bodies spread all over. There were girls who were missing arms, legs and with the little life and energy that they could master, they were crawling on their bellies, they pushed themselves forward crying and yelling: "I want to live, save me save me". But nobody did. What a sight all these young people who could have almost survived this terrible war, just like my beloved sister had to end their lives right in this cursed Germany. I kept on walking I saw German soldiers in their green uniforms, obviously they must have been SS-men. I went

over to them and told them that my sister is wounded and she needs a doctor, they looked at me as if I was from Mars, and did not answer. Then they said: "Gehe nach vorne, gehe schnell, lose nach vorne, move on fast, I was afraid that if I did not do so they would shoot me.

All this time all I could think, was how could I get someone to help me with my sister. I kept on walking nobody listened to me, nobody paid attention to me. There was havoc all over, there were the empty burned out trains, people running in different directions, and there were SS-men all over.

When I got to the end of the station, did not know which way to go, so I continued along the forest on my right, until my strength gave up and I had to lay down.

I laid down on my stomach, not knowing that my factory uniform was all bloody. The uniform was made of very heavy cotton, it was a dark gray material. On the sleeve of my shirt (blouse) was my number 30165 and on the collar was a small green ribbon to indicate that I was a foreigner a prisoner. I have no idea how long I was lying there after I collapsed.

All I knew was that I could not move, that I could not get up, to go and find somebody to help my sister. When I came to myself I heard from far a noise, and as the noise was coming closer, I heard a horse and boggy. Before I knew, I saw this young man and

his horse stop right in front of me. He got off the wagon, and asked me in German: "Was is lose? Warum weinst du"? What happened, why are you crying? So I told him that we were bombed in these trains not far from here, which he already knew, and that I left there my sister who needs help. Then he said come, get up. I could not get up he had to lift me up into the wagon. I had no idea where he was going to take me, and what was going to happen to my sister. In the mean time the blood from my wounds was running all over. I kept on telling him, please maybe you can help me to save my sister her leg is cut off. But he did not answer me, he just listen to my cry and my begging.

He took me to a place where there were many other girls from our train. They all came to the wagon to see who is there. And I kept on telling them to go and help my poor sister, that her leg is cut off. Everybody was crying, terrified and confused. Before I knew the ambulance arrived and I was put into the ambulance with two other girls who were sitting on benches while I was put on the stretcher.

The ambulance took us to what they called a hospital for "foreigners". It was a small wooden barrack next to a regular brick hospital building. When we got to the hospital they did not know that we were Jewish. There were other wounded girls, but one thing I remember that Luba, who worked in our Revir (Infirmary), said: "Look at them, they are all wounded, but nobody is as badly

wounded like my niece, look at her face? The nurses put something on my burning wounds to stop the bleeding, and they put me to bed, in this small room where there were at least six or seven beds (cots) one next to another. Once they put me down I lost conscious and did not know what happened to me nor where I was. I run very high fever due to the wounds which were not medicated. My wounds became infected and nobody attended them, for now they already knew that we were Jewish. I can hardly remember what transpired there. When I finally woke up one day. I was told that the German doctor found out that we were Jewish and that if the nurse would give us as much as an Aspirin, he would kill her. Every day he would come and check the medicine cabinet, to see whether anything was missing. So this was our "First Aid" no medication, no food. There was nothing we could do, there was nobody to ask for help, all we could do is sit and wait for G-d to help us. I was very sick I run very high fever and according to the girls in my room, I must have been hallucinating. When I was sober again, they told me, that all I was talking about was my sister and her wounded leg, which was hanging on a hair. And that I kept on asking everybody to go to the station and help my sister.

As per Fela Heinflig: She saw the planes flying all over the station suddenly there were bombs falling all over. Her freight car was lifted off the floor. Wooden boards were flying all over.

She and her sister jumped off the car and run into the woods. There were death bodies all over, there arms, legs, casualties everywhere you looked, this was a terrible bombing. In the woods they met all our SS, they were hiding from the bombing. Some of them gave them very small thin piece of bread. Then they were taken to the Buergermeister's quarters, after which they were brought back to the trains. The war was not over yet, and they joined the SS or Germans who were moving East with the front toward Berlin. According to some of the people who survived this terrible bombardment our Oberschaft Fuehrer was running around looking for the girls. He kept on telling the SS in German "Die Juden Bande hat ausgerissen". which means the Jewish Gang run away. And when he found any of them he shot them to death. People told me that the French POW hid the girls in the bunkers or in the "Schutzgruebe". Or simply covered them with branches and leaves in whichever possible way there was to hide them. When I came to myself, and realized what happened I could not accept the fact that I lost my sister. I fantasized, that maybe somebody picked her up, and helped her to survive. And maybe she forgot her name, and does not remember who she is. I kind of hoped for these things to happen, but they did not.. Tecia Olsher who was with us, was wounded in her legs, and she could not walk. Along came a civilian German man, he lifted her and brought her to the hospital. In fact she was with me in one of the hospitals in Luckenwalde , and

also in the POW hospital later on. Eventually she landed up back in Lodz. When I returned to Lodz in August of 1945, I went to see her. They amputated one of her legs, which did not help. Tacia Olsher died in Lodz some time in 1945.

All my dreaming did not help, nobody helped my sister and I never saw her nor heard from her again. And that is how I lost my beloved sister, for whom I was ready to slave for the rest of my life, because if not for her we would have never survived in the Lodzer ghetto.

This little who was born with a silver spoon, for whom everything went her way this little girl who helped us to survive in this terrible ghetto should not be given a chance to survive this terrible war? She was so young, she was so beautiful inside-out, she was so smart, she was so intelligent, she was so good to everybody, why wasn't she given the opportunity to live a little?

This I could never understand and I could never make peace with myself, for if anyone deserved to live she did, and not I.

Even though I did not know that nobody survived from our family, I always used to tell her that I would go to scrub floors, so that she should go to school and become a lawyer. She was brilliant and if she would have had this opportunity she would have become a world renown lawyer. G-d gave her the gift that when she spoke everybody listened even the mean Freulein Greiser in Auschwitz

listen to her. There was something about her, demanded respected and love so what went wrong?

What happened to this wonderful sister of mine? She sat right next to me. I wish she should have been given the opportunity G-d gave me. Whenever we were together and had a free minute we would plan our return to Lodz and meet our mother and our brothers. We talked about how our brother Lajzer would open a hardware store with our mother. And how we would all be together again, we were dreaming but our dreams never came true, look what happened.

I still cannot understand, why Reginka was not given a chance to survive this war. Who deserved it better than this little baby like she was called at home who took over the responsibility for the entire family. She was instrumental that we were able to remain as a family in the ghetto throughout the entire time till August 1944. I was ready to repay her for all the things she did for us, but no such luck instead of her surviving this horror, it was I who was left to tell the story. To tell the story of how this little girl saved our lives, her friend's lives, and what in general she did for everybody from the beginning of the war till April 20, 1945.

One night just before we were deported from our camp in Elsnig, I had a dream. I was dreaming that I survived the war and that I was

in America, and that I was running around yelling I am free I am free, and with me was my friend Ada, not Reginka. When I woke up from my dream I was very upset, I realized that Reginka was not with me in this dream. This depressed me very much and I never revealed this dream to her. I just want you to know that a year later, I went to America to live with my aunt and uncle and their sons. The following year which was 1947, I met my girlfriend Ada on Broadway in NY. So what about dreams? Do dreams have a meaning? I did come to America alone and I did meet my girlfriend Adam alone. This still remains a puzzle to me and I have no answer to it.

The fact is that no matter, how hard I tried to find out whatever happened to my beloved sister, nobody was able to help me to find out anything about her. As soon as I came to the United States I wrote to Germany to Potsdam, trying to find out what happened to all the people who died in this famous transport on April 20, 1945. But unfortunately I never received an answer, nobody cared, and nobody other than we the survivors care.

We who live with our pain no matter how many years will pass. This is our heritage that was left to us this is the prize that we have to pay for surviving this inferno.

Hospital in Boelitz:

In the mean time the war was in full swing, the Flak-Spreng grenades from the anti air craft were going all day and night, and we were right in the middle. They were flying over our barracks, we could see fire over our barracks. We were not afraid, we had nothing to loose anymore everybody that was dear to us was gone already.

However, the fire would go over our barracks each and everyone said the Shmah, we did not know whether we would go up in fire in the next minute or two. So when the fire was over our heads, everyone said the Shmah to ourselves. We did not know whether we would survive this heavy fighting between the Germans and the approaching Russian army.

When the hospital administrator saw what was going on, he loaded us naked into a truck. We had no clothes, so we took the blankets with which we covered our naked body. When he saw that, he ripped the blankets off, and left us naked. We were so ashamed we did not know what to do so we gathered together so that nobody could see our shame.

The truck was driving towards Berlin, traveling a while, until we got to the Branderburg Gate, there was no place to go, all the roads were closed, so he made a U-turn and he kept on driving back

where to? Every place we looked, there were white flags on all German vehicles as a sign of surrounded. We passed fields covered with dead German soldiers, this did not make us happy, we were very confused like people from another planet. Since all the roads were closed and there was no safe place to go they brought us back into the Auslander Hospital.

We were very lucky that the hospital administrator did not kill us. He and his wife were very confused, and he was very mean to us, they both treated us like trash. When we got back to the hospital, the war was in full swing, the same anti-artillery cannons did not stop they were more intensified. We had the feeling that we were back on the railroad station in Neu Seddin, but this time we were not afraid, nothing could frighten us anymore. The bombing in Neu Seddin and Potsdam was a sight one cannot forget.

The following morning there was talk that the Russians were coming. It took one more day and the Russians took the city, I think that the name of this city was Boelitz it was not far from Potsdam and Berlin. When the Russians came into our hospital, we told them who we were, and they ordered the Komandant of the hospital to make room for us upstairs in the main building. This was the same German administrator of the hospital. The same one who was so mean to us. The Russian Komandant warned him that he is

to supply good health care for us or he will be punished. The first thing we asked the Russians whether they are here to stay? Of course they said, we are the victors, and we are here to stay.

I found myself in a room with Ruthka Fuks, in a normal hospital bed. I was pretty sick and could hardly walk and move around. I had shrapnels behind my ear, I had shrapnels in my thighs, and all over my back. It was a sheer miracle that my face was spared. This reminds me of what Luba the nurse said when they wheeled me into the emergency room in the first hospital: "Everybody is wounded but none of them is wounded in the face like my niece". This niece of hers was a Forlady in the Amunition factory where we worked. She worked in building number seven, where the "Drei-Coma-Siben" were manufactured. She was a very spoiled and nasty person, all the girls of whom she was in charge hated her. So her aunt Luba was very jealous of us whose faces were not destroyed. The story goes further that a Russian doctor who treated her fell in love with her and he took her to Russia with him. We were still very afraid, but the Russians brought us food, and told us not to worry, they made sure that the hospital gave us necessary medical help.

The German administrator and his wife hated us, but as long as the Russians were there they could not do too much harm to us. These Russian troops were not stopping here they were going further

west, this was still the front. So we were told that these armies were like wild animals, they came from Ural, Kirgis. And right now all they wanted was to have a good time, because tomorrow they might die fighting the Nazis.

They were looting and raping women left and right. We were petrified. A few days later, the administrator put a cot in our room, and his wife slept in our room. In the middle of the night we heard the Russian soldiers knock at the front glass doors, looking for German women. One night they came to our room and took the administrator's wife. Originally when we told them that we are Jewish girls from a concentration camp, that we are sick, Oh! They said, that is beautiful (harasho) we like Jewish girls.

When they were finished with the German women they came looking for new prospects, we did not know what to do. Finally we came up with a brilliant idea, that in addition to our regular wounds we would bandage our heads, and when they will see us in this condition they will leave us alone. One day they came into my room looking for candidates, when they came to my bed, I told them in Russian "Ya Bolnaya" I am sick and they looked at my bandaged head and body and they moved on. Next evening they came again, they had candles in their hands, they came to my bed, they poked us with their bayoneted, as if to look their merchandise over. I pretended that, I was in a deep sleep. When he put the candle to my eyes I

tried very hard to keep my eyes closed, and was stiff like a cadaver.

This seen repeated itself every night, until we were told that after raping some of the nurses, and after raping the administrator's wife again they finally killed her.

One day a few girls came to see us from the neighboring town, they heard that there are some Jewish girls around, and that's how we found out that there were more of us who survived the bombing. While Russians were here, we were given clean linen, food and some medical care it sure felt good for a change to be treated like human beings.

My mind however, was constantly occupied with my sister and who ever I met I would ask about her but, nobody was able to tell me anything about her. Some of the girls from our transport who were stationed in a nearby city came to visit us. They left their mother and sister who were not able to join them.

Unfortunately they found out later that whoever was left in that hospital was killed by the Germans and that the city went up in fire.

It did not take much time, for there was a terrible commotion in our town too

and before we could turn around we saw Boelitz burning. It seemed that the Germans dressed in Russian uniforms were burning the city. We were told to leave the town, for if they would discover us, they will surely kill us. It seemed that the Russians retreated, and we had to leave the hospital as soon as possible. I do not remember where I got my clothing. I remember that some of the girls helped me to dress, and put a towel around my back to protect my wounds.

It was a very hot day we started to walk on the main road. We walked in the middle of the highway together with the Russian army. I walked with my friends and could hardly keep up with them. I had no strength and the shrapnels in my body prevented me from walking. I must have looked terrible, because many times on this march a boggy and horse driven vehicle would pick me up and give me a lift. And then again I would have to walk using my last strength that I could find to continue to flee from the Germans. As I was walking I tripped on a horse shoe. It was a human horse shoe. I managed to bent down to see what it was and I picked it up. This I said to myself is sign that I will survive this war. I kept the horse shoe as a momentum for this escape to freedom.

Along came a truck and he saw that I could not walk he picked me up together with Rutka and took us to a French POW camp. I was exhausted, I burning up from fever. The French POW gave us food and hot drinks, and told us to rest. The French soldiers were very nice to us. They explained to us that the war was not over yet, and that we could not stay there, they would let us sleep over, but we must find another place to hide from the Germans. Things were in an array, the Russians would come and then a retread, The Germans would come and retread. We were in the middle and always had to hide from the Germans in order to stay alive. The French POW let us sleep over, and in view that I was so sick they told us that they would drive us to a nearby hospital which was in Luckenwalde, and the did so as promised. The Luckenwalde hospital was in a brick building, like most hospitals this was off the limits for foreigners. So again Rutka and myself landed up in the hospital for foreigners, that was in a wooden barrack, just like the one we were in Boelitz.

Since the war was not over, we did not dare to tell them that we were Jewish. The city was still held by the Germans. We told them that we were Christian and that we come from Poland. We also told them that we worked in an amunition factory, and since the Russians took over this factory we had to flee from there. To

explain our wounds, we told them about the bombing of our trains at Potsdam. They already knew about the bombing, because Luckenwalde was many kilometers away from there, they could hear the terrible bombing, the detonation which was terrible.

The admitting nurse asked us all sorts of questions, we told her that we were Catholics, this was just the beginning of May, and if they would know the truth, they could have done to us whatever they wished, and we could not take this chance.

We were tired, sick and exhausted, one of us Mrs. Bialer was nearly dead, they practically gave up on her. So they had pity on us and gave us some food, and some medication, not too much, but enough to ease up my pain.

At this hospital we met a few girls from our transport, and a Polish girl, who I could see suspected that some of these girls were Jewish. She was a real Jew-hater, a typical Polish anti-Semite. Being that I spent my childhood in a predominately Christian neighborhood, I was able to play the game and she became my best friend. I tried to convince her that the others were not Jewish.

I was petrified, that if she will tell the German nurses that we are Jewish, we might as well say goodbye to this world and join the rest of the Jews who were killed on Kidush-Hashem.

For the time being I was lucky and she kept her mouth shut. But as the time went on our Polish compatriot was busting with anger. She

was ready to kill us, but there was nothing she could do at the moment.

The Germans had no place to run, all they wanted was to save their skin, to save their lives. Therefore, there was nobody to help her to harm us. She knew that from now on she better keep her mouth shut, or we will fix her, there is no more Hitler to help her. Then we were told that the Russians are coming to town and that we would keep calm.

After a day or two the Russians came and took over city, here again there was looting and raping, real havoc, just the same as in Boelitz (Neu Seddin). And we again had to try to save ourselves from these wild Russian soldiers, who were uncontrollable. This went on until May 8th, when the war was officially over.

For us the fact that the war was over did not bring any laughter, any happiness, any feeling of freedom. The only wish we had is to be able to say that, we are Jewish, and nothing in the world could equal our feeling to be Jewish again, and not to be afraid. One beautiful day I heard somebody speak Polish to the girls in the adjacent room. Since I was mostly lying on my stomach because of my wounded back, I looked through the cracks in the boards that separated our room, and saw some Polish officers who looked Jewish to me. So I asked my friend to send them to my room, for I wanted to see them. When this officer came to my room, I asked him in

Hebrew "Am Who"? And he answered me with tears in his eyes, he started to cry. He told me, that they came to look for Jews and they did not believe that they would find any. They were Polish POW, that who were interned in Hungary.

And that's how our salvation began. I told him that we had very bad care here that they did not do much for us in this hospital. Doctor Wildstein promised that he would do whatever is possible to get us out of here.

The following day the three officers came to see us again, they told us that they are doing whatever they can to help us. When they finally were able to find a place for us at the POW army hospital they came to apologize to me that they will first transfer Mrs.Bialer, because she is very sick otherwise she would die in this hospital. They sent an ambulance for Mrs.Bialer and took her to the. POW hospital, the Stalag whose number I don't remember, I think it was Stalag 30.

Then came my turn, and the rest of us, as well as the Polish girl the one who was a real Anti-Semite.

When we came to this hospital, to the admitting room, which consisted of a small room, behind the desk sat a Yugoslav soldier who looked like a real gentile. He was blond with big blue eyes he had a big frame, like a healthy soldier. They were registering every patient, like they do at any hospital. I was the first to

register from this second group. He asked me for my name for my place of birth, and of course my religion. This was the first time that I could finally with pride say that I was Jewish, and looked him straight in the eyes, he did not say anything, he was very business like, and that was it. They assigned us the rooms, and they took us to our rooms.

At first Rutka and I were separated from the rest of the girls. We got a room in the brick building, while the others were put in the wooden barracks, far away from this building. Rutka and I had a small private room on the main floor, with a window, what a difference from what we had till now. The following morning they took us to a very large bathroom and gave us a bath. This was some luxury we did not wash ourselves since April fourteen. And this was already the thirteen of May we felt great. Then they came to take the health history of me and asked many questions pertaining to the health status of my family. I assume that the reason that they put us in this building is because, the operating room was located in this building, and they knew that I needed surgery. We had many visitors, all the doctors came to see me and asked many questions.

Among them was this young assistant doctor, who admitted us. He came to pay us a visit not as a doctor, but just as a friend. I

noticed that he wore a belt that had a Hebrew inscription on the buckle. Since I was not afraid to be Jewish anymore, I asked him where he got this belt, from which Jew did you take this belt away I asked him? Do you know what this belt says? I asked him? And I told him the Hebrew and then in German. He started to laugh, what are you talking about, I am Jewish he said, that is why I came to see you, I do not believe you, I said. Why don't you believe me he asked my name is Ernest Klein, I am from Belgrade. This is my belt, I am a member of the Hashomer Hatzair. After this session we became good friends, he came to visit me all the time. There were two other doctor assistants, who were very nice to me we were told that they were Orthodox. So at first we thought that they were Jewish, but then we found out that they were Greek Orthodox. So for us they were just friends, good people, very intelligent, but that was all. Then there were two Jewish doctors, one was a married man Dr. Pollack, the other was Dr. Spitzer a single man. Both of them were very good to us, they tried their best at all times.

The first few days were spent with all different tests and X-rays, and other medical examinations, then the doctors had conferences what to do with me. In the mean time I was pretty sick, and could not even get off my bed. At night somebody knocked at our door, we asked who was at the door, we could hear a male voice mumble some name, but we could not make out name, naturally we did not open

the door. It seems that he found out that there are two girls in this building, and he was ready to have a good time with us. We were very scared, in the morning we found out that he was mentally ill, we were afraid of what was going to happen to us. All these POW men wanted to see us, we were like freaks to them. This was a Stalag of 30,000 men, just imagine a few females among them they were all curious, and wanted to see us. Every night Rutka Fuks would barricade the door, which we always bolted.

I was very sick, I run very high temperature, and the doctors decided that I must be operated on, that they could not take the chance to wait any longer. Early one morning I was wheeled into the operating room. This was a very small room nothing like in a regular hospital. In the middle of the room stood the operating table and around it where all different lights and supplies needed for surgery. To me it looked pretty primitive, but what could one expect from a POW hospital? The doctor explained to me what he was going to do and tried to reassure me that this operation will help me to get better. Then I saw him fasten the X-rays on the window pain, after which he encircled the place that he was going to cut, and did the same to my back. Then they gave me ether, and I was out like a light. The doctor who was operating on me, was the royal doctor to the Yugoslavian King Peter, his name was Peter Petrovitch, a lovely human being. They put me to sleep, and they did their cutting, the next thing I remember is being back in my

room. Doctor Petrovitch tried very hard to remove my shrapnels, but unfortunately, the large shrapnels were mostly located near my spine and it was more of a danger to remove them than to leave them in.

I was unconscious for a few days, and once when the doctors were in my room, I heard them say: I doubt whether she will make it". They did not know that I could hear. Just imagine how I felt, I could not even react this went on for a few days. The fever was high and the infection was not letting up. The puss was running like stream, and the odor from the puss was enough to kill you. Doctor Petrovitch did not let anybody touch me he personally changed my dressing twice a day.

There was no penicillin available, and that's what I needed most. The infection was as a result that for almost three weeks, none of the hospitals took care of me, they just let me lie there. Who knows how much dirt went into my body together with the shrapnels from the bomb. Doctor Petrovitch removed a very large shrapnel from my right side, which prevented me from walking. The second one which he tried to remove was impossible to get to, it is so imbedded, that the only thing to do was to leave it alone.

The doctor was very good to me, he had a lot of feelings, and tried hard to make me laugh and to make me feel comfortable as much as he could. Every time when he would have to change the dressing, he used to say that he is going to call the Fire Dept.

The puss was coming out of my wounds as if you would turn on a forcet, and this was very painful. I hardly complained, for I knew that he was doing his best. Doctor Petrovitch treated me like a father, treats a daughter. He talked to me with love and affection like a father does.

We stayed in this room until it became unbearable, every night Rutka had to barricade the door. Finally we spoke with the doctors and explained to them, that we are afraid to sleep at night because of all these crazy men, who knocks at our door. Our wish came trough and they moved us far away to a very big barrack. There were very few beds, and they moved all the other women to this barrack so that we should be safe.

Since this was a POW hospitals there were all nationalities, and each one was assigned a different part of medicine. The surgery was assigned to the Yugoslavs, and that is why doctor Petrovitch was my doctor, for which I was very grateful. Dr. Petrovitch was very angry with the Germans, he said that they did not live up to the international laws for the POW. He told of how the Germans asked to cook up grass and give it to the POW to eat. The next morning all of them were very sick, and most of them got dysenteries and died. He said that at least a thousand soldiers died from this illness. Dr. Petrovitch always told me that one has to irradiate all the Germans he said that a Good German should get an easy death, and a bad German should get a terrible death. He

said one should suffocate them for what they have done to innocent people that they must pay for their crimes. The first time I heard music in front of my window I did not know what this was all about. Being that I was always on my stomach, I was able to lift my head and see who was there. This was summer time and the windows were open so we could have some fresh air. When I lifted my head I saw a few Italian soldiers with an accordion they were serenading me. They were singing and playing beautiful Italian songs, all this to make us happy, what a difference to what we witnessed till now. Slowly I was getting better, and gaining back my strength.

Dr. Petrovitch asked me whether I have a boyfriend, I told him that I have none. Then he said who is the guy Jozio? I told him this is my uncle, how do you know his name. Well he said, when you were coming out of the operation, all you were calling was Jozio, Jozio. And we were all anxious to know who this was. I could not believe it why didn't I call for my beloved father, or mother, or any of my siblings, why did I call uncle Jozio? I guess in my subconscious mind I must have felt that he is alive, I knew that he lived in Israel or as they called it then Palestine. Very weird..... Ernest Klein came to see me every day, he was very good to me, he spent many hours at my bed, he talked to me about many different things. I did not realize that he really cared for me, that to him this was a serious relationship, but for

me the timing was wrong, and the fact that he was a Shomer Hatzir boy was out of the question. Just as I could never fall in love with a gentile boy, so was an irreligious boy off limits too. So eventually I had to tell him, and he took it very badly, he even told me that he would try to make acquaintance with the gentile girl. He thought that by telling me that I would change my mind, but I was so far away from getting tied to anybody at this time of my life, I was totally confused and very sick. When I was able to get off my bed, I would sit there, just to look around. I have been lying on my stomach for three and a half months already. Then there came a time that they had to teach me how to walk again, which was very hard, but I tried. The doctors told me that the reason that I got well was that I never complained, that I never stopped smiling. That they said was the secret of my miraculous recovery. Among the few women in the barrack was another Polish lady, who was brought to a German prison from the Polish uprising in Warsaw. She was a very nice intelligent lady, not like the other Polish anti-Semite with whom we did not bother anymore. This woman had feelings she understood the Jewish tragedy. In fact she gave me one of her night gowns which I did not want to take, but she practically forced it on me, and I still have this nightgown as a souvenir of stalag 30. As for the Polish lady who was ready to denounce us in the foreign hospital, and whom I convinced at the time that we are all Catholics, he was busting, because now

everybody knew that we are Jewish, and she was angry that she did not have her chance of getting us killed by the Germans, that I fooled her. Nobody bothered with her we just left her alone. And that is how I spent three and a half months in this army hospital. When time came for us to leave, it was very hard to say goodbye to all these wonderful doctors and assistant doctors, they were all great. We exchanged names and addresses, and I was never able to find them. I personally owed them my life, and I always wanted to repay them for all they did for me. I tried hard to locate these people, but was not successful to find them.

**AUGUST 1945 – MY RETURN TO THE CITY OF MY BIRTH, TO THE CITY
OF MY YOUTH, TO THE CITY OF MY HAPPY YEARS OF MY LIFE.**

After staying at the Stalag Hospital (POW) in Luckenwalde-Germany,
for close to three months, and other hospitals. It was my wish to
return home to Lodz, where I expected to meet some members of my
family.

Because I spent all these months in various hospital, I had no contact
with other survivors except the few patients who were with me.

Therefore I was not aware of the true picture of what the Nazis did to
all the Jews, including my family, from whom I was separated less than
one year.

I had no idea about all the atrocities which were committed on our
Jews. Surely I suffered plenty, but who could imagine that they were
out to annihilate the entire Jewish race.

In view of the above I was very anxious to return to Lodz hoping to
meet my beloved family.

The doctors which we befriended in Luckenwalde and who saved our lives,
were planning to return to Poland. They were Majors in the Polish army,
who were taken prisoners, and spent most of their enslavement in

Hungary, and in POW camps in Germany.

Ruthka Fuks as well as Mrs. Domb decided to get in touch with the three doctors who told us that they will be returning to Poland soon.

Dr.Wildstein, Dr. Baran, Dr.Schenkman..

If not for Dr. Wildstein, I and the others survivors, would not be here to tell this story. He was the one, who got us transfered to the army hospital, he was an angel sent from G-D, to save our lives.

We were very lucky, for if not for the POW hospital, we would never survive our illnesses, and because of that I had a special relationship with all these doctors, they were very good to us.

So we approached them with our proposition and all three of them agreed to take us along on their return to Poland.

We could never venture this trip on our own, the Russians soldiers were raping everybody they could get hold of, it made no difference whether you were German, Jewish or Polish, as long as you were a female.

So the following morning the doctors took us to the railroad station in Luckenwalde, and they looked for a transport train that was going East. The Russians were transporting their loot to Russia all the time.

Whatever they could put their hands on went to Russia. I still remember how they would have their arms covered with watches, as many as they could fit on the entire arms.

So there was no problem in finding a freight train, there were no passenger trains to be had. So we attached ourselves to one of these

transport trains. They had no roof, these were open cars, the floors were made of rough wooden boards. These wagons were to transport coal, wood, and other materials, these very primitive freight trains. Just like they used to transport Jews to various concentration camps. Since the doctors were Majors in the Polish army they had legal permission to return to their country of origin, we had no such papers.

Anyhow, we had no choice, we were lucky that the doctors were willing to take us with them. All we cared was to get back to Lodz as soon as possible, we did not care how our accommodation would be.

We were lucky that there was enough room for six of us to stretch out on the floor, for this was our bedroom until we reached Poland.

So we slept in our clothes on these hard bare wooden boards. The doctors were very protective of us, they covered us with their long woolen army coats. This they had to do even during the hot August days. They would have to cover us just in case the Russian soldiers were looking for girls.

We had no food, no water, there were no toilets, there was no water to wash ourselves. We were just lucky to be saved from the Russians, for they were on the look out all the time.

Whenever the doctors could find a piece of bread or a drop of water they shared it with us.

Many times the Russian soldiers came over to our wagon, and they said

that they are looking for girls. "Gde Deushki"? they asked,(where are the girls). The doctors told them, that there are no girls here, there are only men. One day a group of Russian soldiers came to our car and said: "Davaj Deushki", "My Spotreli Deushki" (give us the girls, we saw girls). We were hidden under the hay, on top of us were the heavy woolen military coats. We could not breathe, we could not move our bodies. We were petrified, what if they start looking for us?

After the doctors convinced them that there were no girls here, then they finally left our train. The three of us were lying there like dead bodies until it got dark, so that G-D forbid they should not change their minds, and come back to the wagon again to look for us. And that is how we travel slowly towards the East, towards our beloved homes.

The first stop was Berlin.

We got off the train and went into the city of Berlin. I can't tell you how happy I was to see Berlin practically leveled to the ground.

Wherever we turned there were bombed out houses, the stench was all over, it was impossible to breathe.

I guess to clean this mess will take many years, before this city will look anything like it did before. The Russians did a good job on this

Then it was time to look for a place to sleep. There were no hotels, no hostels, no apartment houses where we could rent a room. We had no other choice but find a bombed out cellar and that is exactly what we

did. You can imagine our accomodation, I am sure the rats must have been our neighbors. But we had no choice, we were very tiered and if we wanted to sleep, we had to settle for this. Don't ask how we slept through the night. We survivors had good experience, nothing was too hard. There were no blankets no heat, just a concrete floor, no windows a dark dungeon, where we were able to put our bodies to sleep. And that is how we spent the first night in Berlin.

When we woke up in the morning we started to look for a place to eat, after all we could not go on without food forever, this was not war anymore.

We found a small place just to have some bread and coffee.

Then we walked around the streets of Berlin, this was good medicine for us all, to see what happened to this invincible Hitler and his victorious country, and his German race. We saw many disarmed German soldiers, they all looked tiered angry, unhappy, dissatisfied, no more the proud Germans with their supperiority, who wanted to rule the entire world, and have plenty of slaves around them.

Dr. Baran called over one of the German soldiers, and asked him to sing the German national anthem. So naturally the soldiers sang it the way he used to sing it. No said Dr. Baran "Es geht nicht so", it does not go like that. Sing again, and he gave him a zetz in the face, just like he Nazis used to do it to us. Try again he said, and the soldier sang Deutchland, Deutchaland ueber alles, and again Dr. Baran reprimanded

him. The soldier stopped, and dr. Baran said:

"Sing Deutchaland, Deutchland unter alles, that is the right way, that is the way it goes (Germany is inferior). So the soldier did as ordered, saluted Dr. Baran because he wore his Polish uniform which indicated that he was a major in the Polish army. And then he left pretty upset for this was not the way a German soldier was ever treated.

We continued our sightseeing of Berlin which gave us a lot of pleasure, then we returned to the main railroad station in Berlin, to look for a transport train that was going East to Poland.

1945 was a very hot summer, the sun was burning like fire and the nights were extremely cold, almost like it used to be in Auschwitz.

We found another transport train, again an open carload wagons, and as if luck would have it, we had a few days of very heavy rains.

It was a real down-pour, we had no rain coats, no umbrellas, all of us got drenched, and we prayed for the sun to come out and dry up our clothes. We had nothing else to wear, we could'nt protect ourselves, these were open freight trains, and we prayed we should not get sick.

The next stop on our journey home was Frankfurt on der Oder, believe or not this was the new Polish boarder. On one side of the river Oder was Germany and on the other was Poland. What a joke for us who knew Polish geography from school, this was hard to believe.

So again we got off the train and looked around a little, but there was nothing to see, almost the same picture like in Berlin.

We tried to get some food to sustain our hunger, so again we saw bombed out houses, ruins all over. The Russians made sure to pay them back for what the Germans did to their cities, they sure gave them a lesson they will never forget.

Next stop on our journey was Posen, Poznan in Polish, big city and full of Poles. We went to the Red Cross because the POWS were well treated on their return to Poland, especially since all our doctors were Majors in the Polish army. If I remember they gave them money food and all necessary papers

However, they did not bother with us, we were nothing, even though all of us were born in Poland and this was our country. You would think that this would entitle us to some benefits. They knew very well from where we were coming, what happened to us and what was waiting for us.

All that did not matter, they did not care for a few Jewish girls, their feelings for Jews did not change, they had a good teacher.

Since we were with the doctors we knew that they will not leave like the Poles did, that they would share with us whatever they would get from the Red Cross.

Our next destination was Lodz, and that's where our tragedy unfolds. We arrived at Dworzec Kaliski which is the Kalish Railroad Station, in the city of Lodz.

This was a well known place to me for this was not far from the neighborhood where I grew up.

In order to get to the center of town, one had to take a taxi or a street car. We had no money, we stood there bewildered, we did not know what to do, where to go? We were lost in this big city of ours, the city we were born in. This city the place where my father was born, the birth of my mother, brothers, my sister, and my entire family was suddenly so cold and so strange to me.

The doctors saw what was happening to us, how hopeless we were, and they had pity on us, they worried about us and tried to help.

Finally they stopped some of the people and asked whether they knew of a place to sleep for these girls? In this neighborhood nobody was willing to help us, they ignored us, and kept on walking. They must have realized that we were Jewish, so why stop and help.

We had no money, we had nothing with us other than the clothing we were wearing.

We told the doctors that we could walk to the center of town, we know our way, and we told them to take the street car on their own.

The doctors would not listen to us, they did not let us walk and they insisted on paying our carfare. When we went into the trolley, the conductor told the doctors that they do not have to pay because, they were in the army. Then they came to us, and asked for carefare, and that's when the doctors paid for us.

Even though we have not been in Lodz since they pushed us into the ghetto which was many years ago 1940, we still remembered Lodz as if

we left it only a day ago. So we got off the trolley. And again the doctors wanted to find a place for us where we could spend the night. They approached some people that looked Jewish to them, and asked them about lodgings.

So they found out that there is a house on Kilinskiego street which is reserved for people who are returning from Germany to Lodz.

We made up with the doctors to meet the following day. The doctors were not from Lodz, they were all from the southern part of Poland, so they did not know our city as we did.

Dr. Baran was from Lemberg and so was Dr. Schenkman, but Dr. Wildstein was from Krakow. All of them were anxious to return to their cities and to look for their relatives. We said goodbye and hoped to meet them tomorrow. We felt very close to them, they became our protectors and we hated to lose them.

So the three of us Mrs. Domb, Ruthka Fuks and I, started on our way to Kilinskiego street, we wanted to make sure that we will have a place to sleep.

We walked crying, we felt sorry for surviving the war, what were we to do? We just cried and cried, all the way. We felt sorry for surviving the war, what were we to do now.

This city where I spent my happy and sad years suddenly was cold and unfriendly as if I have never seen it before. There was no place to go, no door to knock at, and no door that would open and take us in.

When we reached Platz Wolnosci (The Freedom Square) a Russian officer stopped us. He came over to us and asked us why we were crying??

In his broken Yidish he told us that he was Jewish and that he wants to help us. "Why are you crying, what happened to you"? I could not answer, the tears were choking me and no word could come out of my mouth.

Mrs. Domb told him that we just arrived in Lodz, which was our home before the war and now we have no place to go, we were lost.

The Russian officer was very nice, he had a Jewish heart even though he was a communist. He spoke with us in his broken Yidish and told us " that we are young and that we have to go on, that we should not give up, the future will be good for us". He took out a bunch of bills and gave them to Mrs. Domb, and said "Go and buy yourselves food do not go around hungry, the war is over and you deserve some happiness".

We thanked the officer, and told him how we appreciated his kindness, These were the first kind words we heard in the city of Lodz.

Even though this Russian officer was so kind to us, this instance depressed us even more. Is this what we waited for? is this for what we suffered and survived for ? To be beggars?

How could we find happiness? After all this was once our cradle of happiness, and what is left of it now? There were no answers for us.

We just walked and walked until we finally came to our destination Kilinskiego street, I do not remember the number of the house, the

house reserved for the returnees.

It was a building like any other building in the city of Lodz.

We asked some people we met there, where are the rooms that were reserved for us, and they directed us to the court yard.

Inside the court yard was a bombed out annex without doors without windows. So we walked up two flights of steps, and found an empty room which they told us will serve for our nightly accomodations.

There were no beds, no blankets, no toilets, no running water. Just an empty room bare floors, which was to serve us as our beds. But there was one thing there, which we did not have in the trains, and that is a roof over our heads, how nice.....

How nice of Lodz to prepare such beautiful lodging for us, such a nice welcome.....after all these years of suffering.....

We had no choice, but simply reserve the floor space for the night, at least we will be able to stretch out our aching bones, otherwise we would have to sleep on the street. Can you believe that? Here in Lodz there was no other room for us? How sad who would believe these things in 1939 when we were home right in this same town.

This was the month of August 1945, three and a half months after the war, couldn't they have found better accommodation for us broken up survivors? It all added up to our mood, to our unfortunate situation.

Here we met other returnees, and they too had no place to go. From them we found out that there is a Jewish Committee in Lodz. They told us

that they are located in the Bais Yaakov building which is located on
Srudmiejska street.

So when we got up the following morning from our "Luxurious Lodgings",
we went looking for the Jewish Committee. When we got there the place
was very crowded, there were lots of people all over. Everybody looking
for help for family, for familiar faces just like we did. We had to
stand in line for many hours.

As I was getting closer to the window , I notice that my cousin Cesia
was sitting and working at one of the desks. So I went over to one of
the office ladies and asked her to call my cousin, which she did.

My cousin was very happy to see me, I told her that I have just been
released from the hospital, and because of that I had no contact with
the survivors, and have no idea what happened to our families. I asked
her whether she met any of them and she informed me of the sad news,
that as far as she knows none of them came back.

I could not believe my ears, I was full of hope that I would meet my
beloved mother and my brothers, and here I am told the bitter truth.

This was only one year since they deported us from Lodz to Auschwitz.
How was I going to survive without them? How could these bestial Nazis
kill everybody in such a short time? This was too much for me to take
all at once. This was not what I was waiting for, this was not why I
tried so hard to put up with my sufferings.

My sister and I accepted everything in the hope that G-D would spare

our families and that eventually we will meet again and be one happy family like we were before, even though our beloved father would not be with us anymore.

Cesia saw that I could hardly talk, that this was a terrible shock to

6 me. Had I survived the war with all others I would have by now known what happened to the Jewish people. But out there in Luckenwalde in this big hospital the truth did not reach me like it did the others.

When I calmed down I told Cesia that I slept over on Kilinskiego and that I have no place to go. She told me not to worry, that when she will finish her job, she would take me to her place, and that I could sleep with her

Rutka Fuks and Mrs. Dora Domb found some friends, and they too found a good place to stay, so we were happy that we do not have to return to this "Famous Hotel" on Kilinskiego street.

Later in the day we met the doctors as we made up the day before. We gave them our the addresses of our temporary quarters, so that they could get in touch with us. We said goodbye to them, and we thanked them for all they have done for us. We hoped that we would be in touch, for they were like angels sent from Heaven to protect us, and that we surely appreciated everything they did for us.

So the next important project for me, was to get medical help. My wounds were still open, I needed to have the dressing changed. I had no money to be able to see a doctor. The only alternative for me was to

go to a clinic.

I remembered that further up on Gdanska on the street where I used to live there was a Health Station, and since I already mentioned I had no money this was the only way out. I was still very weak and could hardly walk up the hilly street, but never mind with my perseverance I was able to get there.

When I got there, they told me that they cannot treat me, that I have to go to different place on Sienkiewicza street ,which is open to the general public. The Sienkiewicz street was very far from Gdanska,being that I had no money all I could do is walk there which was very hard for me.

So there I was again no choice for me but to go there. When I came to the clinic on Sienkiewicza, the place was jammed with people like all other clinics. I sat there many hours untill my turn came, and they finally called my name, I felt relieved. They took me into a small examining room,and when they looked at my back, they could not believe what they were seeing. This was the first time they saw a girl wounded from bombs. A female wounded from bombs they said, where and how did this happen? They asked many questions, they wanted to know everything. There I was telling them about my tragedy about the loss of my beloved sister, and I just could not go on. I broke down this was very fresh for me and I could not deal with it. Poles are Poles when it comes to Jews there was no feeling. This was just pure curiosity.

They did what they had to, and that was that. They did not offer me any thing, no help, no money as if nothing happened. I asked for additional dressings which they gave me. At least I should be able to to change the dressing or with the help of my cousin and not have to come there every day. It was very important to change the dressings every day so that my wounds should not get infected. I hoped that my cousin Cesia would be willing to help me.

I had made up with my cousin to meet her after work so that she could take me home to her place and introduce me to the rest of her people who lived there. After she finished her work we went to Zakatna 21, which was the next building to where my dear aunt Serul lived before the war Zakatna 19, what a coincidence.

We walked inside the building and then into another entrance in the small court yard. We walked up two flights of stairs, and there we were in front of the door. She opened the door with her key, and that's where we met the other tenants of her apartment.

First she introduced me to the two youngest members, whom I knew very well, they were next door neighbors to my brother Lajzer who had a small room on Marysin. I was very happy to see them, they were my brother Chaim's age, and were lucky to survive. The next in line was a young fellow who I think was our contemporary, and finally an older male who was maybe twenty eight or thirty years old. These were all the tenants in this apartment. All of them greeted me very nicely and were

very cordial to me, they made feel welcome. There were two bedrooms and a kitchen and dinning room. Cesia slept by herself in the small bedroom, which had twin beds, so there was room for me. I did not have to feel guilty of taking away somebody else's place. Immagine I was to sleep in a normal bed, all by myself, I could not believe it.

To sleep with clean linen, have pillows and a coverlet, what a luxury.

But in spite of all this comfort I did not feel any happiness.

I still could not come to myself, I was in schock, what do I do, where do I go?

Where is my mother? where are my brothers? and where is my dear Reginka? No answers, I felt like a personer that is left in the dessert all alone, helpless, hopeless. As if the best thing for me to do is to die and forget about this world.

Every day when Cesia came home from her office, I would ask her whether there was any news, maybe somebody from our family survived, but the answer was always NO, NO SUCH LUCK....

The Jewish Committee was only a few blocks from where we lived before the war. I walked these streets so well known to me, but now they were all strange to me cold. I could not look at them every corner reminded me of my family, and the good times we had together. How was I going to pick up things and go on with life?

Every day I would go in front of the Jewish Committee to look at the new list of survivors, but never did I find any of my family, every day

I would hope I would hope that maybe tomorrow one of my brother's names will appear.

The only thing that I had dear in this city right now was the grave of my beloved father MHRP, and that nobody can take it away from me.

So even though that the cemetery was at the far end of the town I decided to go there by myself. And since I had no money the only way I could get there was to walk and for me still weak from my operations and wounds this was no easy undertaking. But where there is a will there is a way, and in spite of everything I made it.

How could I not go to my father's grave, I had to go there and greet him. I have not been there for a whole year, there was no problem in finding his grave, I used to go there very often, even though it was forbidden by the Nazis to enter the cemetery. Every time I had a day off from work, I would go to see my brother Lajser on Marysin, and of course my father's grave too.

He was buried in the first row next to an Ohel of a very well known Rabbi(Borenstein), where people before the war used to come by the hundreds to pray and light a candle.

When I got to the grave, the metal tablet which had the saying we chose for my father's temporary Mitzewah, did not stand up anymore. Reginka used her protekcja to have it made at the Metahl-Betrieb.

It was lying flat covering his grave, as if it marked the end of the Flatto family. As if nobody will ever come to visit his grave, so why

should this sign stand up? Who was going to read this beautiful saying which was so befitting for my beloved father. This made a terrible impression on me, it was like a bad omen. I was bent over the grave, thinking that nobody is around. And suddenly when I lifted my head, I saw this man, who stood about two graves away from my father's grave. There was this Jewish man with a siddur in his hand, El Mol Rahamin he asked? Sorry I said, you can't say it because I have no money to pay to pay, so you cannot do it for me. I just got back from Germany and I have nothing to give you.

He turned to me and asked, which grave are you talking about? I could not talk, I could not say even one word, so I pointed to my father's grave. Don't worry he said, I will make the El Mol Rahamin without money, don't worry. He made the El Mol, and I could not stop crying and when he left I poured my heart out.

I told my father that as of now nobody, but just I alone came back and survived this Holocaust. And that I have no idea how I can go on without my beloved family all by myself. I spent a long time at my father's grave, I could not leave this dear little grave, which was all I had left in this world. Nobody answered my prayers I just kept on crying, and then I realized that it was getting late, that I can't stay here forever, that I must leave. That I have no choice, I just have to leave this only beloved grave that belongs to me only.

So I picked myself up and left this dear grave of mine, and started

walking back into the city, just like I did when I came here.

The Jewish cemetery was far away from the center of the city of Lodz, it was located in the poor Polish part of the city, which during the war was part of the ghetto, and right now there were only Poles living. In order to get back to the center of the city I had to pass the places where the ghetto was situated, that meant that I was walking in the direction of where we lived in the ghetto. So I decided that I would go to see the apartment, the room. Maybe I will find a picture or two of my family.

Slowly I came to Franciskanska 36, the building did not change, it looked just the same, as when we lived there. I went upstairs, to this long dark corridor, and knocked at the door. I could hear a woman's voice, replying to my knock: "Who is it she asked"? So I answer her: "I used to live here, please open the door, I do not want anything from you, I promise there is nothing I will take from you. All I am looking for is some pictures or letters of my family, please have a heart". "Go away" she said many times, while I stood there like a beggar. "Go away, she said or I will call the police. Go next door, there is an empty room full of garbage look there"

She never opened the door, and I could not believe how mean these people can be, she had no heart, she knew very well what happened to us and from where we were returning, but nothing moved her heart, just like Pharo.....

But then again, I forgot for a minute that I was dealing with a Polish Anti-Semites, they had no feeling, no love for us Jews.

According to the Jewish Congressman Lajbel Mintzberg, the Poles had a definite plan for Jews, they had a good teacher. They learned fast from Hitler and his comrades, how to make Jews suffer. And that is why the Germans were able to build so many concentration camps in Poland. They were very happy that the Nazis were doing the job for them, and that is to get rid of the Jews.

I still remember the signs after the war when I came back from Germany, they were all over: "My chcemy Polski bez Zydow" (We want a Poland without the Jews). This was our welcome from the war, or they would say: "The Jews claim that the Germans killed them, look they are all over on every corner, look how many came back".

And those Polish people who helped or saved the Jewish people deserve everything one can do for them, to make their lives happy. They are the heroes, they are the angels that G-D sent to save our lives, they are the real human beings, who risked their lives to save some of us.

No matter how much the Poles try to tell that they saved the Jews, we know better, we saw how they helped the Nazis to kill the Jews.

There was nothing for me to do, other than to go to the dark room where there was no electricity, a big empty room full of garbage.

Heaps of papers, no light, just little stream from the side window, because this room was a triangle, so there was very little light

coming from the outside. I did not know where to start, this was the only chance I had to find something that belonged to my dear family.. Finally I sat down on top of the garbage and started to look at every piece of paper I could find, that was halfway legible. These things were there since the Poles took over our rooms, who knows what they did to it. Then a miracle happened, I found my father's army book with his picture on it. It was in a very bad condition, but at least I had something that was dear to me. I still did not give up, I kept on looking and looking in this huge heap of garbage hoping to find some more things. And in the end it paid off I found a dirty picture of my mother, Chaim, and Regina which was taken on our vacation in Amilia. Then I found a small picture of my maternal grandfather. And I still did not give up I tried very hard not to miss any of these torn papers, but unfortunately, there was nothing else I could find in this mountain of garbage. Most of these papers did not belong to my family, I had no idea who they were, or to whom they belonged. I spent there a long time but eventually had to give up because there was nothing else I was able to find.

Imagine how concerned these "Decent Poles" were about their Jews who were sent to Auschwitz, that they saved for the previous tenants a room full of garbage.

We really should be very thankful to them, they were real great friends of the Jews....very sympathetic.. full of feelings.....

This was a very sad experience, wherever I turned, life was against me.

What a way to go on, but for some reason or other I still did not give

So with my new treasures in my hand I picked myself up, and left this place, my last place in the ghetto where we lived with my mother, my two brothers, my sister, and the room where my beloved father died two years ago.

I started on my way back to the center of the city, I kept on walkin, like in a transe, wrapped in my past, wrapped in tragedy. I just kept on moving forward, as if I was walking in my sleep.

When I came to Cesia's place I told her of my escapade, and I asked her whether she knew of a place where I could find anything pertaining my family. She told me that there is an archivum some place in Lodz maybe they have somethings that belongs to my family.

Then I decided to visit the place where I lived when the war broke out hoping that maybe I will find something that belong to my family.

I went to the well known to me address Gdanska 15, I walked the long concrete walk on the side of the front garden. How painful this was for me. All my beautiful memories were shattered in view of the fact, that there was nobody left from my family to join me on this mission.

As I entered the first court yard so well known to me, I saw our janitor Gregor working near the water pomp. I went over to him and said Hi, he looked at me and could not place me, who are you he asked?

Grzegozu I said don't you know who I am? He said no, Grzegozu I said

again:

"I am Hanka od Flattauw". He crossed himself, boy he said you have changed.

When I left our home for the ghetto I was a young little girl and here I was a broken down young person. He told me that he lives on the ground floor in one of the tailor's apartment in the main building.

No more in the first floor of the delapedated small house which stood right after the big garden.

So I went to meet his wife who saw me through the window. I stopped in front of the window to talk to her. They never invited me to their house, they never offered me a cup of coffee. All they told me is that there is nothing left for me. Mrs. Cohen the German woman who was married to a Jew and lived in our building shipped her own and our belongings to Germany. As for our apartment all the furniture went to Germany, there is a Polish family living there, and there is nothing left there that belonged to us. So I never saw our apartment. Today I realized that they tried to prevent me from seeing it, so I should not claim what was ours. They were not interested in me, they protected their own Polaks. Then they told me that there is one Jewish tenant who lived in this building before the war, and they are living in their own apartment which they occupied before the war.

I went up a flight of steps and knocked at the door. I don't remember the name for sure, but I think it was Mrs. Ziegler who opened the door.

And again did not know who I was, so I introduced myself. Her sister Miss Schultz was a friend of mine, she too survived the war and was living with them, however she was not home right now.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Ziegler were very nice to me, they offered me food, which I could not eat, because I broke down. They wanted to know about my family and that was very difficult for me to talk about.

I stayed there for a while, I promised to return, which I never did, I could not stand the sight of this building it was too painful for me.

I kissed and thanked them, said goodbye and left with a broken heart.

So naturally my next project was to find the Archivum, and when it came dear family nothing was in my way, I surely was not lazy.

After many inquiries, I found this archivum. When I got there I met a member of the Verteilungstelle from Brzezinska, he worked there.

I asked him to look up family Flatto, and see if there is any information about them. When he came back, he told me that the only thing he could find was an I.D. that belonged to my sister, and that he could not give it to me this belongs to the archivum, this is history.

I started to cry, and told him that my sister was killed in the trains on April 20, 1945 and he cannot take this away from me. I also reminded him of all the times that I took his ken-cards to be registered so that he did not have to stand for hours in long lines.

He remembered that, and finally let me keep my sister's I.D. So again i

was I possessed something so dear to me, that no money in the world could buy it for me. I was very happy, at least I had some photos, I could look at some member of my beloved family.

When I got "home" Cesia had a surprise for me, she brought home a telegram from America, addressed to the Jewish Committee of Lodz. The telegram read "I son of Lajzer Flatto is looking for my family". This was my uncle Abram who gave his address in New York the USA. He was asking the Jewish Committee to be notified of any of his surviving family.

This was my first hope that I was not alone in this world, that there was somebody, some place that cared about me. I knew that I had family in England, but I did not know their address, nor did I know how to get in touch with them. How does one get in touch with anybody without money to pay for postage of telegram.

I just recalled that when I was in the POW hospital a lot of soldiers used to come to visit us. We were only a few Jewish girls in this huge hospital that had thousands of POW there.

At one time came a British soldiers to visit us, he said that he will be going home to London pretty soon. I gave him my aunts name and all I could remember was that they lived on Ashtead Road. I had no idea in which part of London this street was located. Until today I don't know whether he looked them up, but at least I tried.

Among the men that lived with us on Zakatna 21, was a young fellow, who

took a liking to me and showed his serious intentions all the time, while I lived there. I tried to tell him that I was a religious girl, and that the present time I am not ready for any relation especially marriage. He did not want to listen to me, and kept on telling me that he would protect me and take care of me, that he is not asking me for anything right now, that he loves me. This was a pretty awkward situation, and I had to find a way out. There was a girl that I knew who looked very much like I, so I decided to introduce him to this girl. One day I took him there, and my plan worked, they both liked each other. And from what I was told in Germany later on, the Shiduch was O.K. They got married and were very happy, and I got out of this pressure.

Then I was told that the father of the Lehrer girls survived the war, he was back in their apartment which was in my old neighborhood.

Mr. Lehrer was waiting for his three daughters, and whenever some of the girls that knew his daughters went to see him, he would give them a dress for any news about them. I had no nerve to go there, I happened to be with his daughters in Elsnig, in fact I was with them in the same train. They were the first ones to jump out of the window during the bombardment and were killed instantly. I could not go there and tell him this bad news. It would be not be proper to mention that Franka Lehrer was guilty that I was in her car, for I belonged with the Burke sisters who were in a different car and all of them survived.

To this day I do not know why I agreed to her proposition to join her, I guess the Malach ha Mavet pushed me to it. Had I remained with my original fives, nothing would have happened to me or my sister. The wagon the Birke sister were in was not damaged completely as was mine. Then I was told that the parents of Bronka Bernheim were back in their hotel on Zawadzka street,(the Bristol). So I went to see them, hoping to meet Bronka. Bronka was not back, but I met her parents, her sister and Dr. Salomonowicz who was engaged to Bronka in the ghetto. They were all very nice to me, they offered food, and very kind words. I was very happy for Bronka at least she will have her family again. Bronka spent her years in the ghetto with her grandmother who was killed in Auschwitz.

My cousin Cesia was engaged to a very nice religious young man, and I was told that they were planning a wedding, his name was Moniek Horowicz.

When the wedding came around Cesia invited me to the wedding, but how was I going to her wedding, I had nothing to wear. Cesia offered me her red dress, but Cesia was tall and I am very short, and built smaller.

She offered me this dress with the understanding that whatever alteration I need to wear this dress, after the wedding I have to put it back to it's original state. I had no choice, I had to take it in and shorten it quite a lot. There was a lot of fixing to be done, believe or not, after the wedding I returned the dress to her in the

condition that she gave me before the wedding.

So I wore Cesia's dress to her wedding, and I wore my high boots for I had no other shoes, but since I sat behind this long table, nobody could see my get-up, no stockings bare legs.

After the wedding Cesia and her husband moved to a very nice apartment, on Dombrowskiego street, which I only saw when I went to them to say goodbye when I was leaving Lodz.

Well I inherited her bedroom all to myself, this was something, at least I had a decent place where to sleep, and I certainly appreciated this luxury.

Every day I would go to Srudmiejska street, to the Jewish Committee, to look for newcomers, to see whether I would meet a familiar face. I was not very lucky.

On one of these visits I found out that Judge Weiskopf survived, and that he had a very important position in the Jewish Committee. I knew Mr. Weiskopf very well, he belonged to the Verteilungsstelle where I worked. I was sure that if I were to ask a favor of him he would surely help me. I would go there every day, but I could not get enough courage to see him. Every day I found a different excuse, until one day he got very sick and he died.....

One day while walking home on Srudmiejska street, I noticed this beautiful blond girl with her beautiful page-boy hair. She looked very familiar to me. Suddenly I realized that this was a class maid of mine,

Hela Mniewska. I went across the street and called her by her name, she stopped, she looked at me as if I was a poor beggar, I don't blame her, I guess that's the way I looked then. She did not recognize me.

I am Hanka Flatto I said, remember me? We went to public school together, Hela don't you recognize me? Then she said OH! Yes and that was all she said....She never asked me what happened to me, where do I live, where was I during the war, or where do I come from? nothing. She just stood there, almost ready to start walking. She acted just like to Polish goim did. Then I asked her how she survived this war, and she told me that she and her entire family were saved, I guess they must have had false papers. Then I asked her who was around from our crowd that we knew, and to that she answered that Mrs. Hyman returned from Russia with her husband and their son. So I asked her for the address, which she gave me, and then she left me there standing.....

I could not believe it, here is a girl that went to school with me for so many years, a girl who used to come to my house, and I would visit her house. We lived in the same neighborhood close by. How callous and insensative can a person be after this terrible war?

This hurt me very much I did not want anything from her, all I was looking for is some feelings some compassion, I would have never accepted anything from her anyhow. This was too much, she was now the fancy lady, the rich girl, who sneared at the poor friend, the homeless beggar, whom she did not wish to know, and that is that.

This was my first encounter with my school friend, little did I know what was waiting for me in the future.

So I decided to go and visit Mrs. Hyman who was my class teacher for many years at Moskiewicz public school. I was not very fond of her, she was a very cold person and she only liked fresh kids, not the one like I, quiete and timid. I hoped that maybe her stay in Russia during this war made her a little sensative to other peoples troubles, maybe she melted a little.

I went to Aleja Koszciuszko street, which was a very beautiful stree, like a bulevard. I had no trouble finding the house. This was a very modern building. In front of the building was a small sign that read: Dr. Hyman internal medicine. I walked back and fort, but could not get myself to ring her bell. On one side I wanted very much to see Mrs. Hyman who knew me my mother and my sister for so many years, on the other side I was afraid, that I might receive the same how do you do, that I recieved from my friend Hela Mniewska.

I was afraid to be disappointed again, after some time I decided to go home and forget about it, I did not want to get hurt again. So after a few minutes I left the place without ever seeing Mrs. Hyman.

Next day I again went to look at the names which were posted in front ofthe Jewish Committee. There I found Sara Stern's name and that Sara formed a Bnei-Akiba Kibutz in Lodz. Since I was very lonely, hungry for familiar faces, I went to see Sara Stern. She was very nice to

The kibutz had only a few rooms, there were many bunk beds. There were many boys and girls, however the only people I knew was Hela Lederman and Kozlowski. Sara wanted me to stay there, but I told her that I was still sick and I did not know where to turn, and what to do with myself.

One day as I was leaving the house, right in the court yard I saw this person, I could not believe my eyes, this was my own cousin Hanka Flatto from Kalish. We both stood there paralyzed, we could not speak. She found out in the Jewish Committee that I was alive and was coming to meet me. Hanka kept on looking at my leg, she was told by some people that I lost my leg, and here she sees me walk like any normal person. She was speechless. We hugged and kissed for a long time, we were very happy to see each other. Our family was different from Cesia's family who had very little to do with the Cudkiewicz family, she was with her Unikowskis.

I took Hanka up to the upstairs to the apartment, I introduced her to the rest of the men, and asked them whether it would be O.K. for my cousin to room with me. They were very nice, they accepted her with open arms, and that made me very happy. And that is how Hanka moved in with me and we shared the bedroom together.

I showed Hanka the telegram uncle Abram sent but we both had no way how to get in touch with our families abroad. The Jewish Committee did not take care of these things they just gave us the good news and that was

After a few weeks of being together I heard rumors that there is Chaim Flatto in Hamburg Germany. I was full of hope that Chaim survived the war, and if this was not enough a member of Bnei-Akiba leaders from before the war told me that he saw Chaim on a march on April 27, 1945, boy oh boy was I happy.

But how does one get out of Poland, how does one get to Germany?

I heard that Sara Stern sends Schluchim to Germany, so I went to Sara Stern and told her about my brother and would she let me go with these people.

She was very nice and understood my situation and accepted my wish, so I had to make arrangement for my trip, Hanka had to either go with me or find other living quarters.

That was not too hard, for Hanka decided to registered with Bnos-Kibbutz in Lodz and was well taken care of.

My cousin Hanka chose to stay in Lodz, she joined the Bnos Kibutz, where she was well recieved by her many friends. This made me feel well that I did not abandon her, that she had a good place to stay in.

So now it was time to go and say goodbye to my dear cousin Cesia, to let her know that I was leaving Poland with the Bnei-Akiba. I told her that I was hoping to find my brother Chaim and to join him wherever he was.

So I went to her place and told her all about it, she listened and showed no sympathy. Frankly speaking I had the feeling that she was happy to get rid of me, even though I had no contact with her since she

got married she never invited me to her house.

Cesia offered me money, she took out 300.00 zloties and she was going to give it to me. Here she said: "take this money, maybe you will need it". I looked at her, and said: "No thank you, I do not need any money I am going with the Schilichim and they will take care of me". Her offer was an insult to me, do you know how much a bread cost in Lodz in 1945 ? Three Hundred zlotys could only buy one third of a bread.

Where did she have the audacity to offer me, her own cousin, who came to say goodbye, a beggar's charity ? So again I thanked her for her good intentions, I said goodbye and left.

When I left her apartment I started to cry, this rich cousin, who's husband is a co-owner in a big shirt factory, offers me 300.00 zlotys, this is beyond my imagination. How could she be so cold without a feeling? Insensitive to my problems?

Saturday night I went to the kibutz, so that I could join the chevra that was leaving Lodz for Krakow.

Sara Stern was giving them all sorts of things for the trip. She offered me too, but I did not accept anything. I told Sara that, since I am not a member of the kibutz, than these things are not coming to me. I absolutely refused to take anything from her even though I needed these things more than any of the people that were leaving the kibutz with me.

So this is how I left Lodz at the end of August 1945, just like I did

the year before. I left Lodz exactly with what I came back after the war about three weeks before.

AUGUST 1945

Lodz

During my short stay in Lodz, I tried very to make inquiries about my family. Every day I would go to the Jewish Committee on Srdmiejska Street to meet people from Lodz to see whether they knew anything about my family.

The truth about the terrible Holocaust did not reach me, for I was wounded and spent three and a half months in a P.O.W. hospital in Germany. Therefore e I had no outside contact with any of the survivors.

The Germans occupied Lodz only four and a half month after we were deported to Auschwitz. After all we were only gone eight months who could imagine that in eight months the Nazis would try to kill every Jew who was still alive.

Every day I would go to the Jewish Committee, meet new people but none of them knew anything about my family. Until one day I met Jacov Singer from Bnei-Akiba, who told me that he met my younger brother on the "Death March" on April 28th, 1945. He told me; that my brother Chaim was very optimistic, he told him that we would survive this war, he knew that the Germans lost the war.

I was very please with this news and began to dream to meet my brother. Shortly afterwards somebody told me that there is a Chaim Flatto in Hanover-Germany. Well you can imagine my happiness. However there was no way to correspond with Germany, there were no telephones I could use, nor did I know where in Hanover to look for him. I had no money to even send a telegram to the Jewish Committee in Hanover, I was pretty desperate. Until a brilliant idea came to my mind. I knew that Sara Stern head of the Lodzer Bnei-Akiba Kibutz was sending "Scheluchim to

Germany. I went to Sara and explained my situation and asked whether it is possible for me to join the group. Sara was very kind to me, she told me not to worry, you will join the Chevra she said, and do not worry about the money, I will take care of everything. She also told me that I should be ready on Saturday night and meet them at the kibutz.

I went home and told my cousin Hanka about my plan, I asked her whether she would be willing to join me, but she refused. I hated to part with Hanka this would have been the third time we parted, but I had no choice. We talked about what to do and she said that she will try to join the Bnos Kibutz. The next day Hanka was accepted at the Bnos Kibutz in Lodz where she knew quite a lot of people, this of course made me very happy.

When Saturday night came around I reported to Sara Stern, she introduced me to the People that would be leaving with me this evening. Sara was busy distributing all sorts of clothing and stockings people needed for this journey. She even wanted to give it to me, no I said I did not earn this, I am not a member of the kibutz and I do not deserve these things. I told her that she is so kind to me to let me join this group, and that this is all I need.

The truth in the matter was that I certainly needed all the things she was giving out. I had nothing, I did not even have a pair of stocking a sweater, and all I had was what I had on me. My outfit consisted of a skirt, blouse and a German air force jacket, which I brought from Germany to Poland.

Anyhow, late that Saturday night we took the train to Cracaw-Poland. This was a long journey, these were not sleepers where you could stretch your body and go to sleep.

When we arrived in Cracaw we went straight to the BneAkiba Kibutz. The kibutz was located in the Jewish quarter in a pretty nice building. In any event much nice than in Lodz. The building consisted of a few floors. They had sleeping quarter, a dinning room, a Shul and others.

We stayed in Cracaw until the Jewish Holidays were over, so in a way this was very good. The kibutz conducted regular holiday services just like it was done before the war. The people in this kibutz were very friendly and kind. Everybody tried to help with different chores, and they made us feel very welcome.

One day during the holidays we heard a woman scream in front of the building. Everybody run to the window to see what she wanted, and that is what she was screaming about: "They killed my boy, they took his blood to bake their matzos".

Well one of the boys run down the stairs, he went over to her and said: " If you do not stop with these lies right now, I will kill you, enough of these terrible lies, which are the caused the death of six million Jews. She realized that her project did not go over well, that this was not a joke, and that today's Jews will not let her get away with it, so she left quickly.

During the day there were many outsiders that used to come to the kibutz to learn. The kibutz did not only have sidurim, machsorim, but they also had a set of the Talmud.

People came to study in the kibutz because they did not own any of the above.

Among the people that frequented this Shul was a young Jewish soldier who sat and learned the Talmud by himself.

Since I was very eager to find out the address of Dr. Wildstein who save my life, and who was a major in the Polish army, I felt that this young soldier would be able to help me, all I knew was that Dr. Wildstein was in the army in the city of Lublin.

I went over to this young soldier; I intruded myself and told him about my wish, he was very nice to me. The following day he brought me the information about Dr. Wildstein, and he also found out that Dr. Wildstein was teaching at the medical school in Lublin. Am where do you think this medical school was located if not in our own and famous Yeshiva of Chochmei Lublin.

I was very happy this gave me an opportunity to get in touch with the person that did so much for my friends and me.

This young man must have been very impressed with me because a few days lasted he told me, that he saw me in his dreams, and that I am the girl for him.

When the time came to continue my journey this young soldier came to say goodbye to me. He told me that no matter where I will be in Germany he would find me even if it will take six month or more, which he did.

Majer Weisbrot was in charge of our group; this group was large than the one we left with from Lodz. Majer called an orientation meeting, and explained everything about The trip. He told us that we will leave Poland as Turkish deportees, and that we must get rid of everything that has any Polish in it. Majer also told us that at the border we must act as if we do not understand a word of Polish, and that we should keep on saying: "Ashrei Yoshvei

Veisecha". This was pretty hard for us for we heard the border police say; Zydki, Zydki, and we had to put on expression as if we did not know what they are saying. After checking our papers they let us cross the border into Czechoslovakia. What a relief, for the first time we felt free. Nobody called us name, nobody looked at us with hate.

Here in Prague I was able to answer my uncle Abrams telegram that he sent to Lodz looking for his family. My leader for the telegram and stamps gave me money for my letter to my aunt in London.

Prague is a beautiful city, there are arts wherever you turn, and there is a lot of history in this city.

From Prague we went to Koszice where we spent Saturday at a Bnei-Akiba Kibutz. We even had an Oneg-Shabath and I was elected to recite a Hebrew poem. The text of this poem was about a boy who was leaving his family to go to Israel, where he became a shepherd.

From Koszice we went to Bratislava, a real ancient city that lies on the Danube River. Bratislava had a very famous yeshiva called the Pressburg Yeshiva. We stayed in Bratislava for a short time and had to prepare ourselves for the next border crossing. We had to smuggle into Hungary, which was quiet and experience. The border between Czechoslovakia and Hungary consists of high mountains and forests.

By this time our group was quite large, the smugglers charged a lot of money per person and they would not bother with small groups, they were out to make a lot of money.

We were told by our leader that we are not allowed to talk, we must be very quiet, to make sure that the border police does not catch us, and that we should stay close to one another.

So just before it was getting light, we followed the group into the forests. There were no walking paths, we were walking between thick forests, and the branches were sticking out all over. In fact very often one would just walk into the branches and be injured by them. No matter how painful this was, you had no choice, you just had keep on walking even though the blood was running from your cuts. We were stopped many times by our smuggler, and were asked to lie down on the ground, which was wet from the dew. This was pretty frightening experience.

After many hours we were lucky to cross the border and we found ourselves in Hungary. At this border the groups separated, our leader took us to small village where they had a hostel for the transient people. I do not remember the name of the village, however I recall the scenery was absolutely beautiful.

One day a young man who used to be around me very often said that he wants to show me something. I like a fool did not ask him what and followed him to this terrible place. It seems that this village had a concentration camp for he showed me a small crematorium. There was still a talith hanging in the opening. This experience killed me, I was very angry and I started to cry. All I could think was of my beloved family,

and how they ended their lives. I could not look at this young man, what right did he have to take me there?

He was never in a ghetto or camp, he and his family were hidden during the war and survived in tact.

This hostel was in a barrack, there no kosher kitchen here and food was spares, I walked around hungry, I was wishing for a piece of bread, what a feeling after the war to be hungry?

Among our Bne-Akiba group were two young men who wanted to continue this journey on their own. One was trying to get to his fiancée, the other was a Scheliach, Then there was a girl who was trying to go to her fiancé all of them in Germany Since I was very anxious to get to Germany I asked them whether I could join them and they agreed.

The boys knew their way around in Hungary this was their territory, so they brought us to Budapest. In Budapest they contacted the Hungarian Committee, where to Israeli

Schelichim did all the work for the DPs . They provided false legal papers for us. I became Aranka Flatto born in Hungary who is traveling to study in Germany.

Budapest is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe, they took us to see the Famous Synagogue, which at the time was being repaired, this was something to see. Our next destination was Austria, Jehuda and Ernest had to find a way to get there. They had to find a new smuggler, which they did. As usual we had to join another group, for like other smugglers they would not bother with four people.

So again before daybreak we were back in the mountains again. The smuggler was very strict; when he heard the cry of a baby he would stop us from walking, and make sure that there was no noise. He paid attention to every sound, to make sure that the border police was no place near us. These escapades were very scary, we could hear voices from far away telling somebody to stop, and then we would be shooting. This made us shiver, for the police could be here in a second and the same thing could happen to us. Usually when the smuggler heard this he would make us lie down and wait.

G-d was good to us and we crossed the Hungarian border into Austria. Since we had papers that we were students traveling to Germany it was easier for us to travel inside the country. First we went to the city of Graz and from there we went to a small village near the Austrian German border.

Since this was already Friday we had to stop for Shabath, we had to look for a place to stay over night and to get some food. The boys were wonderful, they bought bread and Fruit so we should not go hungry on Shabath.

We stayed in a small rooming house, we had only one room. I recall that the girl and I slept on the floor, there was only one bed and we felt that the boys deserve it more than we.

On Saturday we took a walk around this little town, which was surrounded by tall mountains. We were told that during the war many people found their hiding place in This tiny quiet city.

When the evening came around the boys decided that we should go to the movies, which right near our rooming house. So we went the movie house consisted of a long narrow room. I guess it was big enough for the local population. To be honest I don't even remember what the movie was all about; I just went to please the boys because they were so good to us. These were real religious boys and they treated us as if we were their sisters.

Sunday morning right after breakfast we were again on our way. This time our destination was Salzburg where we stayed for a day or two. Salzburg the city of music, the city of culture surrounded by beautiful mountains. In Salzburg I met some people from Lodz, but again nobody came across my family.

Then it was time to travel again, this time we needed a smuggler who would take us across the German border. I still don't till today how the boys found out where to get the smuggler. And as before there was a very large group of people trying to get into Germany. Among this group were a lot of people from Russia, there many families running away from their native countries just like we did.

Since terrain between Austria and Germany is full of high mountains, after all these are the Alps, this made our smuggling very difficult.

We had been very quiet; all you could hear is the birds and the waterfall coming down from the mountains. We even had made sure that we made no noise when we were walking over the fallen branches and leaves. We knew that if the border police would discover us we would be shot on the spot. Nobody wished to be killed by the German police, they killed enough Jews already.

Full of fear and with G-d's help we crossed the Austrian-German border, which was our final destination.

What a relief now we do not have to be afraid anymore, we could go wherever we wanted.

So we took the train to Munich. Jehuda and Ernest knew that the best place for Jewish people to meet other Jews is the German Museum. This museum was reserved for the displaced person who was looking for a place to live in. This was still 1945; people were still dispersed all over Europe.

We arrived at the German Museum late at night, there was still a small office open, and so we had to register there. They assigned a place for us to sleep and they took us in the dark to the bunks. We took the top bunks and I don't even know how we got there. We had no idea who slept on the lower bunk beds. My friend and I were exhausted; we must have fallen asleep right away.

When we woke up early in the morning we first saw that this was a very large room full of bunk beds. We met Jehuda and Ernest who came to say goodbye, we thanked them for all they have done for us and each and every one went their own way.

Then I went down to the main hall, there hundreds of people milling around looking for a familiar face. I met quite a lot of people from Lodz. They were very nice to me,

they all wanted to shower me with money of which I had none. They saw my predicament and wanted to help me, but that made feel very bad. I know that they meant the best for me, I know that their intentions were very noble, but I felt lost and could not accept their kindness, I was not used to a hand out.

So this was the end of my journey from Lodz-Poland to Munich-Germany.

One of these friends was able without my knowing push a bill into my pocket. I found this bill when I came to Foehrenwald.

Satisfaction

The only person that I knew who survived the bombing is Tecia Olsher who was saved by a miracle. She was wounded, she had a bad leg. And a civilian German picked her up and sent her to the hospital. Tecia was with me in various hospitals in Germany. How she managed to get back to Lodz none of us know. All I know is that eventually they had to amputated her leg and even that did not help. Tecia Olsher died in Lodz in 1945, however Tecia Olsher was a witness to see the end of the war, and had the satisfaction to see what happened to this Victorious Third Reich, to see How Hitler's Final Solution ended.

I recall the fact that Mr. Henry Opoczynski's father who was very sick towards the end of the war in the ghetto said just before he died: "I am dying with a much lighter heart because now I know that the war is towards the end and that the Germans are finally loosing this war:.

We were all waiting for this blessed moment when the war would end and we could see with our own eyes that these murderers should get what they deserve, and that we should be able to return to our normal life.

Unfortunately, none of these came through, the Germans did not get the punishment they deserved, and we survivors could never get back to our normal lives. How could we have

a normal life without our parents, without our siblings, without our aunts, uncles, cousins, grandmothers, grandfathers? How can one live alone, all by you, no relatives, no friends? How can one have a normal life? Hitler accomplished his will. He said:” That he will kill all the Jews, and the few that will survive will be like the death”. How true this was and still is, we all live with the past, we never leave our dear once, and they are with us wherever we are and whatever we do. Whether we are happy or sad.

Sure we tried to build a new life, sure we are here to tell our story, sure we are here to have an ISRAEL and show the world that nobody can erase us from this world, for we are G-D’s people and we are here to stay no matter what. G-D put us on this world and nobody can finish us completely.

Look at our wonderful country Israel, is there another country in this world that accomplished as much as Israel did in such a short time? No there is any, these countries exist for hundreds of years and they are no place near to compare to Israel.

In spite of the fact that the world does not leave us alone we are here to stay: “Am Israel Hi” and “Nezach Israel lo Ishaked”.

Sometimes we all feel that this is our satisfaction, for Israel is our mother, our home even if we do not live there, we all are her children.

I often think of all the Zionists who would have given their lives to have an Israel, and did no live to see the birth of their life long dream.

Why did six million Jews have to be killed to have this wonderful rebirth? This country was given to us by G-D, it is ours to keep, why did we have to pay such a high price to regain it?

All my questions will never be answered, I guess I will just have to wait for the World to Come to find out the answers, but whatever it is , to be a survivor is a very painful life. You can never separate yourself from the past.....it will always follow you like a shadow. Frankly speaking I would not wish it to be different, no matter how painful my life is without my family, I still do not wish to forget them or to black them out of my memory. They are too dear to me and I want to have them around, just to myself.

I write mostly about my dear sister because she was the last member of the family with whom I spent the last few months, we both did not know at the time what happened to our mother and our brothers. And of course my sister died without ever knowing about the horrible end that our mother and brothers as well as the rest of the Jewish people had.

I just would like to mention that I loved every member of my family. They were the most wonderful human beings one can encounter, we had most wonderful parents, model parents who instilled in us very high values and morals, which I do not find very often today..

I only wish that my children, grandchildren and all other children should never have to have my experience and that the world should be a better place to live in for everybody.

MY JOURNEY FROM LODZ TO GERMANY 1945

After staying in Lodz for about four weeks, I left Lodz with a small group of Young people from the Bnei-Akiba kibbutz. Our destination was Krakau, where we Were to spend a few weeks for Rosh Hashanah and the balance of the Jewish Holidays through Succoth.

Before we left Lodz, we were told that in order to leave Poland we would Eventually have to act as if we are Turkish Jews returning home. Therefore we Were told to make sure that we did not have any documents that would reveal that We were Polish Jews. The few pictures that I got from my cousin or those that I Found in the garbage in the ghetto, in the room next to ours. I had to line them With white papers, so that the polish inscription in the back of the picture Should not reveal our true identity.

The fact was that the Poles did not welcome us, us the returnees from those Horrible concentration neither camps, nor did they let us live in Poland. Our welcome

Signs were all over: "We want a Poland without Jews".

Many of the of the Jews who were lucky to survived the camps were killed by the Poles after war. These Jews returned to Poland where they were born in the hope That they would find their families and start new life all over again. And what Did they meet? Nothing but horrors, new persecutions and fear, the Poles Wanted you out, and they made sure that you would run out of Poland soon.

But this was not so easy; they did not want you in Poland, but at the same time They did not let you leave neither.

The question was how to get out of this cursed land, and how to fool the boarder Police? So the only thing left for us Jews was to provide false papers, so we Could claim to be foreign Jews who were brought to Poland by the Nazis.

On an early Sunday morning we took the train to Krakow, and we were instructed

To make believe that we do not understand any Polish. We tried to speak Hebrew which the Poles did not understand, to them Hebrew sounded like Greek. The Journey to Krakow was without any trouble, in fact it was rather pleasant, we were very relaxed and happy to leave Lodz with our unpleasant stay there.

When we arrived in Krakow, we went to the Krakow Bnei-Akiba kibbutz, where we met

other members of the Bnei-Akiba. Most of these members were not from Lodz, they were from other parts of Poland and Lithuania.

The kibbutz was located in the Jewish part of Krakow. It was a small building, but big enough to put us up. There was a dining room, kitchen, a Shul and nice sleeping quarters.

We all got assignments to help the kibbutz with whatever we could, and everybody was willing to chip in and help so that things should be running smooth.

The holidays came very soon and we had a lot of work to do. There was Rosh-Hashanah, Yom-Kippur and Succoth which we tried to observe the way we saw it at home.

This was very difficult for all of us, for none of us had any parents or siblings. We were all orphans, which was pretty new to us. Only a year ago I was in Ghetto Lodz together with my mother, my brothers and my dear sister. How were we going to observe these holidays without them?

Everybody suffered alone; we did not talk about it for we all had the same problem. We tried to support each other, for if we did not do so, these holidays would have been a disaster without our families.

In spite of all that, everybody tried very hard to make these holidays as bearable as possible, and I must say that we succeeded.

There was one instance that I cannot forget. One day during the holiday of Succoth we heard a Polish woman scream very loud, she was standing in front of the building, and she was yelling as loud as she could: "They killed my son", "They took his blood for matzos".

A few of our members run down the stairs to see what was going on. Then one of The fellows went over to the screaming woman and said: "Show me the boy, show me His the blood" And if you do not stop these lies I will kill you, you better get Away from here as quickly as you can, or I will call the police, and don't you Ever come here again with you lies".

Naturally she got scared and left the place immediately, and she never returned. Here is an example of how the Polish people received us after the war. They Tried their anti-Semitic games again, but we the young people were not going to Let them win their old games.

When the holidays were over it was time for our group to proceed to our Destination, which was Germany. They assigned a leader to our group, who briefed Us about our mission, who told us that we will be going to Czechoslovakia, too Prague. He told us again that we are to make believe and act as if we were Turks Returning to Salonika. We had false identification papers to show at the Polish And Czech boarder Police, that we were foreigners. Even though Czechoslovakia Was not too far away from Krakow, we still had to take the train, and get off The train at the boarder so that the boarder police and custom people would Check our papers and our belongings, which consisted of practically nothing. When we finally got to the boarder, the Polish soldiers tried to speak Polish to Us, but we made believe we did not understand, all we kept on saying was "Ashray Yoshvay Veysecha". To the Polish soldiers this sounded Greek. Finally they let us go, and we found Ourselves in Czechoslovakia, we were very happy to leave Poland where nobody Wanted us there anyway.

Once we were in Czechoslovakia our next stop was Prague. It took us quiet a While to get to Prague, where we spent a few days. Prague is a beautiful city, There are a lot of interesting places to visit, but for us, who had no money this

Was not the time for it? After a few days we continued to Koszice were we Spent Shabbat. From there we traveled to Bratislava another old city with it's

Famous cobblestones.

From Bratislava we had to smuggle into Hungary this was a very difficult Undertaking, and it took a lot of guts on the part of our leader and us. Our Leader was a great guy. He kept our spirits up, and told us all the time that we Should not give up. The smuggler was paid off, for he knew the boarder very Well and that is why he was making a lot of money from the people who were so Anxious to leave Poland in a hurry and get to their destination.

These boarder were usually approached at about four in the morning, so that we Should be able to follow the smuggler.

We were not allowed to talk and had to make sure that there was no noise, so That nobody should hear or notice us. Those were very hilly terrains, in the Midst of thick forests, with tree brunches hanging all over. Among the convoy, There were families with children and even infants. Very often we would have to Stop walking because occasionally a baby would cry, and that was very Dangerous. When that happened the smuggler would give orders to us to hide Among the bushes in the forest. We would have to wait until, he would tell us That all was clear, and that we can continue forward. This was pretty difficult, Especially for me who still did not fully recover from the bomb shrapnel's. My Wounds and postoperative surgery were not healed yet. No matter how little My bundle of my belongings were, I still had to carry it with my. I did not Complain, I tried hard with all my strength to keep up with the group.

Finally we were told that we are on our own, that we crossed the boarder, and That we do not have to worry anymore.

When we got to Hungary, we stopped in a small town for a day or two, and then we Continued to Budapest. Budapest is another beautiful city, but again this was no Time for us to go sightseeing, we were there to get lodging and identification Papers so that we could continue on our journey to Austria and finally to Germany. The Zionist organization in Budapest consisted of many Shelichim from Israel, who saw to it that we the traveling refugees, should be taken care of.

They put us up in a school, where they set up sleeping quarters for us, we were Given food to eat.

The following day we each got our ID, so that we should have legal papers for Our future journey.

From Budapest we started towards Austria, another difficult escapade. Again we Had to smuggle out of Hungary, and that again our leader called for a smuggler, To take us into Austria.

The terrain at the boarder was very hilly just like between Poland and Czechoslovakia. These were steep mountains, and one had to be very careful, one Wrong step and you would fall down the precipice. The fear that went with it Cannot be described. Every few minutes we had to stop, to make sure that nobody Sees or hears us.

The Bnei-Akiba group was not alone; there were many other people, and we always Had to wait for the rest of the group. The smuggler knew the place very well For this was what they did all the time.

Eventually we got to Austria, we came to a small village. The scenery in this Village was like in the movies. Luckily there was a place for us to put down our Belongings and rest up as well as a place to sleep. We were hungry and tired. The only food they had for us was a small piece of bread and nothing else, but We were happy that we were almost at the end of our destination.

The place that they selected for us was a small concentration camp. They still Had the crematorium, which was left in tact. I was very upsetting when this Stooped friend of mine, who was never in a camp, showed it to me.

To him this was just curious sight; to me this was torture, All I could think of Was my family who ended their life by this method?

Here we stayed a few days, then I joined two Bnei-Akiva boys and a girl, they Were trying to get to Germany in a hurry, and that is why we left the rest of The group. My aim was to get to Germany for I was anxious to find my brother

Chaim, which I thought was in Hanover.

We left the group and went to a small town not far from the village. These boys were "Shilichim", so they had some money for traveling and food.

We stayed in this town over Shabbat. Do not ask me what food we ate that Shabbath.

Besides bread and milk there was nothing else for us, but never the less we were Happy nobody bothered us. This was a small hotel; our room had one bed only. We Could not afford two rooms, we slept on the floor. We never undressed and Slept in our clothing.

From this small town we went to Salzburg, which was closer to Munich-Germany. We Stayed in Salzburg for a while. Again we had to get new ID papers, which would Give us legal rights to travel to Germany.

The boys were very energetic and smart, so they got everything we needed which Made traveling easier. We took the train in Salzburg to go to Munich, and this Time we traveled like normal people do in passenger trains. We arrived in Munich Late at night. The boys found out that the only place for newcomers is in the Deutches Museum in Munich. When we got to the museum it was pretty late at Night, but we were able to get a place to stretch our bones.

The museum had some large rooms where they had lots of bunk beds, for people Sleep in. I got the top bunk bed; I have no idea who slept in the lower bunk. I Was happy to be able to rest my body from all the traveling and sleep. I slept In my clothes, I was afraid to get undressed, this way if something would Happen, I would just jump of the bunk and run.

In the morning I left the bunk and joined the other people in the museum, there Were lots of people milling around. People were anxious to find family and Friends. I did not find any family, but I found people whom I knew from Lodz. I Even met a fellow who lived with his very young wife on our street on Zgierska In the ghetto. He was very nice to me he wanted to give me money which of course I did no accept. However, when I got to the DP camp in Fohrenwald, I found money

In my pocket. I never touched this money and returned it to him the way I found It. The same thing happened to me with another person from Lodz, and again I Returned this money the way I received it.

After these things happened to me I first realize the situation I was in. I was Alone, nobody to help, nobody to turn to, all I wanted was find my beloved Brother Chaim. Here at the museum I found out that there was a DP camp in Fohrenwalde not far from Munich, so the boys took me to this camp. When I got to Fohrenwalde, I had to register in the DP office. It seems that somebody heard my Name and told the registrar to put me the room with Fela Hinflig, who asked for Me.

Till today I don't know how she found out that I just arrived in this camp. She and her sister were with me all the time from Auschwitz to Elsnig\Elbe during The war. So Fela came down and took me to her room, which she shared with Another woman from our camp. This was very good for me, at least I was not Anymore with complete strangers. They new my beloved sister, we were the famous Fives, all during our camp time. She was very nice to me and had a lot of Sympathy for me, she knew what Reginka meant to me.

So I settled in Fohrenwald. In this DP Camp there were people from all parts of Europe. There were lots of people who run away from Russia with entire families. We the survivors did not have any families and that made us even miss our lost Families even more. But we had to get used to our bitter and lonely way of life, There was no way for us to turn the world around. We had to learn facts and Suffer individually; nobody could take our pain away.

So this became my domain until I left for America. I wrote about my stay in Fohrenwald in another chapter.

FOHRENWALD 1945-1946

Before I was able to get in contact with my relatives, I spent many months in a DP camp in Fohrenwald near Munich. This used to be a Hitler Jugend Camp. These were two story white buildings. Each building had a few single rooms only. There were many such building and they were located in the middle of the forests.

All the facilities were built to compensate the Hitler Youth, who were being prepared to serve in the Nazi movement. Therefore, there were many sport facilities, a social hall etc.

When I registered at the office of the DP Camp I was very lucky, because my friend Fela Birke requested that I should join her and her sister in their living quarters, which consisted of a single room. Otherwise they would put me with some strangers. Imagine sharing a room with four or five people you never met before.

Fela and the people that lived in this room were very nice to me. She was lucky to survive the bombing with her two sisters, where as I lost my only sister during this terrible bombing in Neu Seddin near Potsdam. They all knew my sister very well and they loved her very much.

This was the most difficult period in my life. I really did not want to live, I just did not know how to go on without my beloved sister and my wonderful family.

In addition to my mental status I still had health problems because of the shrapnel's which were left in my body, which cannot be removed because they can leave paralyzed.

This camp had many Jewish families that survived the war in Russia. A lot of them were partisans that fought in the Russian or Polish forests.

Most of the people lived a normal life in this camp, some even cooked meals instead of eating in the public kitchen. My meals consisted of crackers and coffee. My friend Fela

always invited me to join her for dinner. Her future husband provided the food, and I did not want to accept something for nothing. So whenever they would sit down to dinner, I would always tell them that I was invited someplace else. I did the same with other people that I became friendly in Foehrenwald.

I could not accept the fact that people invited me because, they knew that I have no money to buy food. I hated pity and, and because of that, I kept on telling these lies to save myself from embarrassment. I was not used to get something for nothing, I did not want to be treated as beggar, and I rather would walk around hungry than accept charity.

The public kitchen was not kosher, the only kosher items that I could eat from this kitchen were crackers and coffee. Believe it or not I survived, I even gained weight on this diet.

My relatives that lived in London and in New York were trying very hard to get in touch with me, they already knew that I survived the war. Letters were arriving from London, from New York, looking for me and offering me money, which they sent with different people, however I never received a penny. It was very difficult to locate me, but eventually they found me in Foehrenwald.

I can't begin to tell you how poor I was there. The UNRRA used to give cigarettes to every person in this camp. Many times I would have to sell the cigarettes or a piece of chocolate, in order to have a few pennies in my pocket.

I was lucky that eventually the UNRRA gave out dresses and coats. The block director whom I knew gave me a nice brown dress and a brown coat, other wise I don't know what I would have done in the winter. Foehrenwald was in Bavaria high in the mountains, so winters were very severe.

As time went on I met very nice people, they were very kind to me, they tried very hard to make me happy, but that was a very hard task to accomplish.

I felt very bad that I had no way to earn any money, even for a trip to Munich or Wolfratshausen.

So my dear friend Berek gave Fela and me a break he took us to Hanover to sell some cigarettes, so that we could earn some money. This was the best thing that happened to me. My needs were not very big, all I wanted was some money for traveling, but most of the time I stayed home.

People in Foehrenwald tried very hard to live a normal life, some even got married there, others who came from Russia gave birth to children.

People used to go down to the Social Hall for dances or to see a movie. Life went on, in spite of what happened to us.

I did not participate in any of the social functions, to me this was a year of mourning, and to me this was my SHIVAH for my lost family. The only thing that I did, was read books or study foreign languages. Most of the time I enjoyed being alone, I had no patience to be in a crowd.

I met some people from Lodz who became my friends. Since I was alone and had nobody, they became like and adopted family. They would include me in their trips to Munich and other places.

Then came a time when the Birke sisters got married, this was very emotional situation, nobody had any parents who would bring you down to the huppa. Naturally there was no wedding hall, just a huppa outside our building. One of them married a fellow who had a father and two brothers, the younger sister married an orphan just like we were. Rabbi Friedman who performed a simple Jewish religious wedding reception married them. Fela cooked up a storm and invited all the people to join in hers and her sisters wedding, she made a beautiful dinner.

Life in this DP camp was very quiet, we the survivors had a hard time to adjust to the fact that we were alone, and that we would have to carry on this way for the rest of our lives.

As the months went on, I was told that they were opening a university for Displaced Persons, I was very anxious to find out all about it. My friend Berek took me to Munich to get the information, I found out that the people who had proof of their education would be accepted at once. Then would come the people who finished gymnasium. And finally others would have to take a test in order to be admitted.

I was very eager to go to university, but I hardly finished one year of gymnasium, so what was I to do about it?

The block director who had gone to university in Lithuania promised to tutor me. He was very nice to me. Every day he would teach me, so I should be able to pass the test. I studied very hard because I knew that there was a lot that I did not know. When they closed the schools in the ghetto my wonderful cousins would give me lessons in Latin, Math, Algebra, History and others. They felt sorry for me, and they gave an opportunity to have some additional education. All these cousins were professional teachers and professors.

After a few weeks I went back to Munich took my test, I passed all the subjects except chemistry, which upset me very much, however, they said that my chances are very good, that I would be a candidate for the next semester.

In the mean I received a beautiful letter from my uncle in New York. In this letter he promised to send me papers to come to America.

My English relatives also made contact with me and even send a person to take me to Paris and then to London, but I was not in camp that very day, so they left without me.

The fact that both my relatives wanted me to come and live with them, created a problem for me. I knew my aunt Rose well, she used to come to Lodz to visit her family, and sometimes she would even bring her daughter Annie with her. Whereas the uncle in America and his family were complete strangers to me.

After a few months I received an Affidavit from my uncle in America and had to register with the American Consulate in Munich. I was not very happy about it, how do you go to somebody you never met before in your life?

When the Joint called me to finalize my paper, I told them that I want to go to London. They did not agree with me. They said that my future would be much better in New York than in London. Since I was not yet 21 years old they said, that they would decide what is best for me.

I did not know how much time I would have to wait for my American visa. At the same time I was waiting to hear from the UNRRA University in Munich, for I was promised to be admitted to the following semester, and that created a big problem for me. I could not make up my mind what to do.

In the mean time I received notice that my papers arrived and that I had to go the American Consulate in Munich, so I made an appointment.

When I came to the consulate there were lots of people there, and I had to wait a long time for my next. They gave me lots of papers to fill out, and I had to go through extensive medical examination. When I was finished they told me that they would notify me when my visa would be ready.

All this took place shortly before Passover. Just then the first food packages arrived from my uncle in America. Wish they did come before, then I would not feel so guilty in living with my friends for I would be happy to contribute something to their household.

This would help to express my gratitude to Fela for being so kind to me.

This was a terrible day for me, because on April 20, 1945 I lost my sister in Germany, this meant that I would be leaving the country, on the same day, which took her life. It is hard to describe our relationship, she knew every move I made, and she knew everything about me. She was the one that tried to get an extra piece of bread or extra soup. And all that she

did even though she was four years younger than I. Yes I too tried to do for her whatever I could, but nobody could do what Reginka was able to do.

And that is why instead of being happy that I would be going to America I suffered even more, I could not make peace with my part in life. Therefore I decided to fast on April 20th for I did not know at the time the Hebrew date of her death.

My friends could not understand why I did not show any excitement, any happiness that I would finally leave this cursed land. They were all very happy that I will be going to America to my relatives who were waiting for my arrival, and showed so much love towards me in their letters. Everybody would have been in seventh heaven to get a visa to USA, and I showed no enthusiasm at all.

Who could understand my feelings, how could I leave without my beloved Reginka, who was the only witness to our family tragedy? She was the only one who shared our tragic days and nights in Auschwitz and all the other camps. How could I leave her here in this cursed country, I did not even know whether she was properly buried. All this had a negative response to my going to America. Naturally I had nobody to share my sad feeling with anybody.

When time came for me to go to Funk Kasserne in Munich, which was the quarantine for the people who were about to go to USA, it was very hard for me to say goodbye to my friends.

How was I going to say goodbye to Fela, Mrs, Stein and Berek. I had the feeling that I would never see them again. My friend accompanied me to Fun-Kaserne, where they used to visit me very often. My stay in Funk-Kasserne took a few weeks. I met there other girls and women who were waiting for their visa just like I had to wait.

Originally I was to receive my visa and leave with the first transport of the Displaced Persons, however, somebody else went in my place, and I had to wait a little longer.

Sometime in the beginning of May I left Munich for Bremen, where we thought we would board the ship to go to America, but that was not the case. We again were quarantined and had to wait for our departure that was not a pleasant place to be. There was nothing to do in Bremen and that was no good for me, again I would sit for hours and think about my unfortunate past and the unknown future of which I was afraid.

One day the German cleaning lady was washing the windows in our room, when she found out that we were Jewish waiting to go to America, she said: "Don't worry and in German she said: "Der Hitler comt noch wieder". When we heard that, we could not believe our ears, what audacity to tell this to us? Well the Germans never change, once a German always a German. They hated us with a passion, and they were never going to change just Like the Poles.

This statement contributed to my ought, I swore to myself that I would never again step foot on German soil, for this soil is covered with Jewish blood and they were the killers of my family and the entire Jewish people. To me Germany is one Jewish cemetery, just like the cursed Poland is. My entire tragic life was tied to these countries, and I ought to never go there again.

On May 11, 1946 we were to board the ship. Our ship was called the Marine Pearch, this was an army freighter nothing luxurious about it. My friends whom I met in the room we shared in Funk-Caserne in Munich were assigned to the lowest deck. We did not have bunk beds, we slept in hammocks, and heard the constant grind of the ship motors.

We pretty much stayed together, and that was how we spent eleven days on this ship. What bothered us however, was the fact that there were many German gentile families, who claimed to be Displaced Persons like we were. We all knew their kind, and we were convinced that they bought heir way in, they were Nazis who were running away to save their lives. We were very angry, what right did they have to take away the places from us

the survivors; everybody knew what they did to us. I guess money is a very powerful weapon it even buys freedom for murderers like these Germans were.

There was nothing we could do about it, we all suffered individually, such injustice, nothing will ever happen to them they will enjoy a good life in America. We all knew that they had plenty of Jewish money to live out their lives in peace and luxury.

Anyhow, May was a beautiful month for traveling; we spent many days on the deck and enjoyed the beauty of the sea, which was endless.

My friend Alice and I talked a lot about our future, both of us were afraid, both of us were going to relatives whom we did not know. Alice at least was not alone she had a younger brother, where as I had nobody.

After eleven days our ship arrived at our destination on May 24, 1946.

THE THIRD JAHRZEIT - DP CAMP FÖHRENWALD

Three years have passed, three years is a very long time in my life. There has been a long chain of uninterrupted sufferings since that date. On this particular day that is on the 28th of Tevet, I see my beloved father and your last minutes of your life.

.....

Do you know how many changes took place in my life since the 28th of Tevet 1943?

Do you know what kind of a hell our life became?

Tell me my dear father, answer me, I would like to hear your voice again. I would like to have you near me, and to be able to hold you in my arms and kiss you like one kisses a baby. And I would like to talk and talk with you for I have so much to tell you. There are so many things I need to speak to you about, for there is nobody around who would have the understanding and the right answers that you would have.

Right now I can hear the well known to me words: “Your father is an ordinary person, he does not know anything” and you say these words very seriously that a stranger would be ready to believe you. Do you remember what I used to do to you, when you uttered these words? I would come over to you and hug you and keep on laughing for I knew otherwise. And you would say again: “Of course this is true I honestly don’t know anything”.

My dear dad how I loved those moments, I would be ready to give many years of my life to be able to hear the never forgotten words. My dear dad you know that I always loved you very much. I always use to say that another father like you does not exist. I saw

the whole world in you; today I realize a thousand times more what you meant to me.

And now I am convinced that my opinion about you was always the right one.

Unfortunately the earth will never give birth to someone like you again, this happens only once on the world horizon.

Today I see the Lodzer cemetery and your little orphaned grave in the midst of this tremendous cemetery and me sitting next to your grave. My dear daddy I returned from hell, I returned from fire, I returned to you. I thought that at your grave I would find the freedom for which I prayed so much during the war. I thought that right here; I would meet my beloved mother, my sister and my brothers. I thought that your grave would be the place for our reunion, and that you would unite us all.

Leider, I came back but what waited for me? Bitter disappointment, what I found was a lonely grave whose tablet covered your grave. This tablet, which we ordered from the Metalowy Resort, with its beautiful inscription covered your grave as a sign of deep Sympathy. This happened as a sign that you are alone, that the Flatto Tribe of which you were the father you Icek Aron, you the dearest treasure, that your tribe does not exist anymore.

The tablet fell over your grave so that nobody could read it, because there is nobody from your family to read it, for who do you care if not for your lovely wife and your children?

Unfortunately none of them is alive, they cannot come back and they never will. Only I came back and where is the rest? When I thought about this I had the feeling that I too am an undesirable person, whose place should have been someplace else, and not between normal people whose purpose is to fight for their life.

My dear father how happy I would be if I could be with you right now. If not to talk then at least to lay down on the mound of sand where you remains are. At least to be able to fill myself with the aroma of your grave. To be able to cry like a child, because I cannot cry anymore, I hardly cry. Like right now it feels as if somebody was my neck, chocking my throat. My tears are chocking me; they have no way have stopping. It seems that I became like a stone, like an animal.

My dear daddy how hard it is for me to live, have mercy and help me with whatever you can, so that my life should be easier to take, so that I should not suffer so much. You know that besides our home there was nobody else so dear to me as all of you. And I am sure that you know how much I cared for everybody. I am sure that you know how much I still love you; you were and always will be the measure of goodness, beauty, and nobility.

Dear dad I try to ovoid to do wrong, just like I did when you were around. But this is very hard because the “Bad Ways” is really the main star of today’s humanity. I still remember your words, which are ringing in my ears like a note of the unforgotten symphony: “ Because a person has a tendency to follow the bad ways, he does not think about the consequences, he just follows the current with his eyes closed, and does not even realize that he is on the wrong path.

Yes my dear father, do not think that your teaching is forgotten, that the K.Z. lager changed me, and changed your direction and your advice. Your words were and will always stir me to the right path in life.

You are the never exhausted well of wisdom, why aren’t you here today, I am so Lonely and the people are so bad, why aren’t you here near me?

Was I born only to suffer? Although sometimes I feel that maybe I earned this. That I should have never left the trains. And if I would have stayed in the train , then I would not have suffer, I would have my rest for ever and ever.. Because what is life without you and without our family? Will this ever change?

When you left this world my despair was justified, I felt the tragedy in the air, I already felt it while you were still alive, and that is why I kept on kissing you so much. I wanted to make sure that I had you for myself. They took you away from us like they tear they tare a baby out of a woman's womb.

I always compare you to other people and you know how I feel about you. I am with you all the time, even though the fact that you are not alive anymore causes me terrible pain. Like you always used to say: "So what that I suffer, I am a Jew and Jews always suffer so why should I be an exception". Today I understand all that, today I understand the words that were so strange to me before. Today they are part of my life. Today the third year of the anniversary of your death, I am with you not only with my thoughts, but also with my soul, nobody can take your place.

Why did a strange person have to say Kadish , where are your sons to do so?

When I lit the Jahrzeit candle I could see our unforgettable home, the center of love, warmth, knowledge, righteousness, optimisms and you the king on our throne..

On this day I want to give thanks to you for all you have done for me and my entire family. I cannot say Kadish, but I want to pay homage to you, I need you to explain this terrible situation, for I feel as if the earth is leaving me as if I am sinking in quick sand.

MY CEMETERY

My Cemetery And My Penance

In a short while I will be saying goodbye to the city of Bremen. Beginning with April 20, 1945 I am paying my penance all by myself. I became a full orphan on August 29, 1944 when they took my beloved mother away from my sister and me in Auschwitz.

I was still lucky to be left with my dear sister, the only jewel, the only treasure from my home.

Right now my heart is full of pain, and longing for all my family. My pen cannot follow fast enough the words that I wish to fill this paper with.

This evening is for me the last evening of my stay in this cursed largest cemetery of my dear family as well as all the Jewish people of Europe.

Where are their graves? I do not know nor does anybody else know. However I do know that all of them breathed this air where they spent their happy and sad lives. And this is the soil that took their lives that spread and blew their ashes all over Europe.

These are my treasures, my home with which it is so hard to part. How good it is to be full of pain and suffer on the soil that they used to walk. My beloved, my dearest how can I leave you here and run away so far over the ocean. Leave you here on this tremendous Jewish Cemetery of which Europe is? This is the cemetery of all of you who were killed on "Kidush-Hashem.

I cannot find any relief any consolation to part with you. The thought that I will live in a new place, far away from the place where my beloved used to live, is inconceivable to me.

The Kel-Mol-Rahamim for all the people that were killed on Kidush-Hashem should be said everyday all over the world. We do not know the places where they Died, but we do know that they were murdered for no other reason than they were born Jewish.

The world was divided into those nations who were killing Jews, and those who were allowing Jews to be killed.

I am standing here alone among hundreds of people, orphaned, however, my thoughts are with "Them" who not long ago were with me we smiled together, we cried together, we laughed together, where are they now? They perished; the news about them went into the unknown. I was left alone like an author who is writing a novel about his life.

Many times I have the feeling that I am standing at our father's grave, and I fear that you too will become an imaginary grave, which is frightening for me. Other times I dream that maybe you are still alive, and that eventually we will get together again. It is good to dream even though when one wakes up, the reality is enough to kill you.

Europe represents to me an Altar on which my family was burned, and I am very unhappy that this Altar is being taken away from me, for I will be leaving this place soon. I will leaving Europe the Hell of Mankind, the Europe that radiate happiness became a cemetery for all the Jews and me.

And now my beloved, you are and will be my company for the rest of my life, please help me to be able to part with this cursed land on which you perished.

My only wish is that I should have suffered for all the Jews in the world and that such a Holocaust should never happen again, and with this statement I am saying goodbye to all of you who died on KIDUSH-HASHEM.

On May 23, 1946. (This a translation from Polish into English)

Since the paper that I wrote on May 23, 1946 is falling apart after so many years, I am forced to write these things over again after forty-nine years.

Today is May 23, 1946; our ship Marine Pearch is approaching the shores of the U.S.A.

This is the first time in my life that I traveled by ship, journey took eleven days. All we saw for eleven days was water and the sky.

These were very emotional moments in my life.

At about 2:00 in the afternoon right after we ate dinner, we went out on the deck and could already see on the horizon faint contours of land, which were becoming clearer with every minute. After seeing water for eleven days, this was quiet and experience. I decided not to leave the deck; I wanted to see the first houses on these American shores. And that's how I stood pinned for many

hours, not being able of turning myself away from this most beautiful scenery around me.

With the binoculars in my hand, I tried to convince myself what I see from far, is not a hallucination. It is an honest to goodness land, this land that we wished for.

The ship kept on moving forward. The boat stopped at Ellis Island. Every ship that comes from abroad, must receive permission to legally enter the port of New York. The captain, constantly kept on changing the flags, these were signals for the navy and the port of New York. Finally the last flag went up as again of for the end of the journey for this ship. There were lots of ships at Ellis Island, which were waiting to receive permission to land, just like our ship did.

From far you could see in huge letters that spelled "WELCOME HOME, WELL DONE". Even though these words were not only meant for us, it gave us hope, a feeling of warmth, a feeling of being welcomed in this new continent. These simple words made us all feel great.

The feeling that I had when my eyes first saw the American continent is very hard describes. Imagine just being able to breath the continental air for a change. It is very difficult to write about it, we tried hard to absorb everything that our naked

eye could see. In fact we did not know where to look first, everything was overwhelming to us. These were G-d's wonders, which none of us ever saw before. After an hour, our ship started to move forward again. First came a small inquiry boat. What a feeling, that finally we are at the end of our journey.

From every corner you could see many boats, sail boats, motor boats, and big ships, which was evident to us that New York is a very big port city. The ship stopped again, and after another hour, she began to move forward again.

From far we could see beautiful buildings, this time the ship was traveling towards the port. The toll buildings became, clearer and clearer.

In the meantime it was getting dark, suddenly we could see this gigantic statue of a woman, her arms stretched out to greet the newcomers, with love and warmth like a mother. She is the symbol of American freedom, regardless of race and nationality, religion and everything a person needs to be free.

And that is exactly where our ship stopped for the night, till the following morning about 6:00 AM. Right in front of the Statue of Liberty, perfect place for us survivors.

And you the lights that shine for those who were burnt in the ovens of the concentration camps, and for those who were the victims of the bestial the SS-men, and those whose bodies gave up and could not wait for the end of this war.

And those who fell from the machine guns, the victims of the Fascist Party of which the "Great Hitler" the genius of murder was the head.

Yes these people are asking for revenge, these people cannot be here to be greeted by the Statue of Liberty like we are here tonight. Do not forget that part of Europe is filled with the blood of our dear once; their lights could never shine again. Millions of people had to loose their lives because of the Caprice of once single mad man, who with every minute demanded millions of victims to be killed in the most bestial way.

But you the beautiful light of New York the lights, the light of the skyscrapers, your light are different lights. Your lights are different they are not the light of my cemetery. You do not know the meaning of sadness, you do not

Have the experience of war, you do not know unrest, and you do not know the long braids of smokes and fumes from the crematoriums in which they burnt our mothers, our fathers, our brothers and our sisters. You do not know all that.

You're beautiful light is pure like the sun, it shines with the temperament of free people, good people who are far from what we experienced in Europe.

I was standing on the deck and kept on looking of these beautiful lights of which the reflection in the water was almost like in a fairy tail. I do not remember when I left the deck I full of emotion for all those that could not be here to share this experience with me.

The shores of New York are beautiful, one side belongs to New York, while the other is divided by the Hudson River and belongs to the State of New Jersey. The buildings are beautiful; especially for a European it looks like a fairy tail "The Thousand and One Night". The buildings stand tall and close to one another like in a forest. Everything is in multi color, lit up like a rainbow, mirrored in the waters of the Hudson River. It is almost impossible to tell which is real, and which is only a reflection in the water. I spent many hours that night on the deck looking around, and thinking of tomorrow when I will meet my uncle and his family. Most of us could not sleep this night. We were just lying in our hammocks thinking to ourselves, we did not know what to expect.

In the morning the custom officers entered the ship and everybody had to provide an I.D. The officers were checking our papers while the ship was moving towards the pier, which was a short ride. When the custom officers, and when the ship docked cleared us, we were asked to disembark slowly.

They told us to listen to the loud speaker for instructions. On the walls there were gigantic signs: "WELCOME HOME, WE LOVE YOU". The music was playing all sorts of songs, and there were thousands of people relatives, friends, and just onlookers. We were very confused; we did not know what was going on, where are we going and what is going to happen next to our lives. The people were assembled there, they were waiting impatiently to meet us, and they looked like a protesting delegation.

When I left ship at about 1:00 in the afternoon. I realized my sad situation, and what happened to me and why I am here in New York. At that confusing moment I was very unhappy, I was willing to exchange with any person some place in Europe, to live quietly by myself and needing anybody's help, I was simply afraid of the future. After they checked our luggage, the volunteer's ladies helped us with some formalities. And then they eventually brought

us over to our respective relatives. The public address system was very loud; they were calling out names of relatives, who came to claim us. They used telephones and all different languages to make contact between us and the relatives. There were also friends of people who were killed in the Holocaust, who came to claim their children to give them a home. And then there were those, who had nobody, they were brought to the USA by the HIAS or JOINT. And they had to wait to be brought to the hotel or hostel.

I listen very carefully for my name to be called.

At about 1:30 PM my name was called, and one of the ladies took to my uncle.

And when my uncle appeared there was no need for an introduction, we recognized each other immediately.. According to my uncle, the resemblance was so great, that it was obvious that we belong to the same family. Then he said: " if they did not call your name and I had to find you among the others, I would know that you belong to me" I too, could tell that this was my father's brother even though I met him for the first time. He looked very much like the Flattos I knew, and of course a lot like my father His voice was like my fathers, his mannerism, I could hardly keep my cool, I could not take charge of myself, my tears were chocking me, and my lips could not say even one word. It was very hard for me, all I could think at that moment was about my beloved father MTRP, my

beloved mother, my beloved brothers, and my dear, dear sister. I felt so unhappy, just like I used to feel

And we were going to his house. I arrived at my uncle's house on Friday May 24, 1946 at 4:00 in the afternoon. I met my aunt and my two cousins. They were very pleasant and nice. I Every time my uncle looked at me I could see my father MHRP his voice his way of speaking. It was unbelievable, that two brothers, who were separated such a long time, should act the same. It was a good feeling to be with my close family, however, I could not help missing my own family, for looking at my uncle I could see my father all the time. These were very painful and difficult times for me.

NEW BEGINNIG

My family was very nice; they tried very hard to make me feel at home. They were Very tactful and even though they wanted to know everything about their families, did not bombard me with too many questions.

Their friends, however, were different they kept on asking all about the Holocaust, but I was not able to talk about it. This was a very private and painful situation for me. All I would tell them, was that it is enough that I suffered and there is no reason for them to suffer, so what difference does it make now?

This was different from my DP camp in Germany. Here everybody I met had complete families, and I ad to adjust to the fact that I was among people who were Lucky to run away from Europe in time.

After a few weeks in New York my uncle registered me in the “Better English School”, where I received private instruction and was able to learn English very quickly.

In September of 1946 I registered with the “Cambridge Business School”, where I would go to school in the morning and work part time in the afternoon this way I was able to pay for my tuition. I did not want my uncle to pay for my schooling it was enough that I lived there, and did not have to pay for room and board.

As time went on I got a full time job, at first I was a beginner. I did all sorts office work until they asked to join the bookkeeping department. Eventually I became an

assistant bookkeeper. I tried very hard to do a good job, and was very conscientious about it.

I never gave up studying and kept on going to school to further my education. And Finally I landed at the “Pratt Accounting Institute” where I was the only female among all the veterans. All these veterans did not take their studies seriously; they didn’t have to pay their tuition like I did. The GI bill covered all of them.

I, however, had to work full time and go to college at night in order to be able to pay my tuition. I worked very hard and made sure that I should not waste my time like they did, which eventually paid off.

Because of my education and determination, I kept advancing in the accounting field and kept on earning more money. I would stay up till the wee hours in the morning to do my homework. When the test time came around, I made sure that I was well prepared for these tests; I took my studies very seriously.

This way of living did not leave much time for socialization. The lack of time was very good for me I had to learn to lead a normal and structured life. As a teenager in the ghetto there was nothing normal for me. I had to endure these difficult years, and grow up in spite of everything with the hope that we would all survive the war, and that things would be great after the war.

On weekends I would meet with my friends, we would go out to different places as a group, or double date, which was nice.

My friends had no problem with me for I never talked with them about my past, and was on equal level with them even though I was a survivor.

Most of my friends came from Belgium; they all had their families, whereas I had none,

I kept my troubles to myself I did not bother anybody with it. We did many things together; we went on boat rides, to museums, to the movies etc.,

I tried very hard to be normal and have a normal life; I did not want to be a burden to anybody.

The years were passing very quickly, and then came a time that my friends when they were getting married.

At one of those weddings I met my husband, who was not a survivor in the sense that I was. We were married after six months. I insisted that we should set up house in the same neighborhood, which we did.

We both worked and tried to save some money before we would have a family.

Today we are the proud parents of two daughters, their spouses, and eight lovely grandchildren for which we are very grateful.

So you see that in spite of my terrible past I was able to build a life for myself.

However, I paid and is still paying a very high price for being the only one left from my beloved family. There is not a day in my life that I do not think of them.

Whether I am sad or happy, they are with me all the time, because they are and they always will be an integral part of my life.

BREMEN MAY 7, 1946

Up until now I never mentioned my departure from Germany to the USA, which became a fact on April 21, 1946. Actually I was notified on April 20th that I was to report to Funk Kasserne near Munich for my trip to America.

What a bittersweet news? You already know what April 20th means to me. This is a very sad date in my life. This day broke my heart and life will never be the same for me. April 20th took away my will to live, to carry on for the future. This is a date that I will never forget, and it marks the beginning of my tragedy, because at 11:00 clock IS on April 20, 1945 they bombed our train that was standing on a railroad station in Neu Seddin near Potsdam.

Most people will who will read these pages will not understand why I am so upset, and my soul is hurting. Well let me answer that the tragic death of my beloved sister Reginka who was killed during the bombardment practically at the end of the war while a few days later the Russian army took over this territory.

Most people will not agree with me, because parents are closer than siblings. But in this case that when we were sent to Auschwitz, and when they took away my dear mother and my beloved brothers, I was left with my sister only.

So we had each other, we were able to talk about our home about our parents, we suffered together, and sometimes even smiled together. We loved each other, and I realized what how lucky I was to have my sister what a treasure she was and always will be for me.

Throughout the entire stay in the concentration camp my sister represented my entire family it was enough for me to look at her and the picture of my beloved

home would be in front of me. I would see my parents, my brothers, and friends just like it used to be. However, I would never let her know of what was taking place in my heart, and how I was suffering because of it, whether it was physical or mental. I tried very hard to spare her, she was so young and innocent, I had to be strong for her and shield her from suffering. For I had to be the mother to this “dear child”, to this “Rudziatko” who was the hero of our life in the ghetto and in camp. She was the genius who mastered every moment of our life to save us all. You must understand that she was the only witness to our terrible sufferings.

She could read my thoughts and knew every movement I made. And that is why I would try very hard to hide things from her, I did not want to worry her, I tried to spare her grief.

Who but Reginka saw our other tragic nights in Auschwitz, who tried to get some soup or bread? Who tried to change work, which tried to get a better sweater, shirt, and panties? Who tried to get wooden shoes, rags, needles and even a little milk and extra bread in Elsnig/Elbe ?

You Reginka, you little hero, you remembered and worried about everything, you little “Red Bzdac”. All that I see right now and I have the feeling that you will come back to me, and that you will pull out from under your blouse some stockings and gloves that you got from a German forelady. And then I hear your saying: “Hanka please hide it so nobody should steal it from us”, and when I would not take care of it at once, she would get angry and say: “Because if you I will get in trouble, remember that, you try to get these things and you will see how hard it is, then you will understand”.

Yes I remember all that. I feel very bad about it, I wish you could be here with me. However, I cannot think that you my dear sister are not alive, that all that is my hallucination, it's the anticipation of the past, which right now becomes my presence.

Reginka are you really not alive anymore? Is it true that I will never see you anymore? That I will never be able to kiss your little plump face? Is it true that I will never be able to caress your little white ears? Is it true that I will never be able to see your little red head, and your beautiful red curls?

It is very hard for me to reconcile to this situation, and I doubt that I will never be able to make peace with my terrible fate. My life is going to be a chain of sufferings of which the first flames were April 29, 1945.

Therefore I feel, that the reader will understand me now, and that nobody will judge bad, why the death of my beloved sister made a worse impression on me than the parting of my dear mother and brothers.

Because I was broken up mentally and physically I decided to fast on every April 20, for the rest of my life.

So it was difficult for me that on this unhappy day I had to receive good news to which I did not react with happiness. This news made no impression on me, I accepted it without any enthusiasms, and there was no pleasure, no emotion shown on my part.

I was very angry, because I felt that this day belonged to my sister only, and nobody else existed for me, I was very unhappy about it, but there was nothing I could do, that's the way it is.

My friends could not understand why I showed no emotion at all, I was pretty level headed, where as they were very nervous and upset that I would be leaving them soon. I felt that it would be very tact less on my part to show them that I really did not care to leave.

In my soul I felt that nobody could make me happy, I was sick with loneliness due to the fact that I remain alone without any member of my family. Nobody could ever take place of my beloved family, this is a fact which cannot be changed, and that is why my leave to America did not represent any happiness and charm. I accept everything without any reaction without any joy.

On April 21, 1946 I left Fohrenwald for Funk Kasserne near Munich, the place where they assembled people who were leaving for USA.

My parting with Fela and Mrs Stein was very sad, I had the feeling that I would never see them again. By sheer miracle I found my male friend in the same train, which was to bring me to Munich, it was very pleasant for me to have company not to be alone. He was very good to me a real friend he worried about everything. I will never forget his behavior, which was a reflection of his character forever.

After a week of my stay at Funk Kasserne I was asked to go to the American consulate in Munich. There they made all sorts of health tests, and loads and loads of questions, after which I received my visa.

Every day I would check the list, which posted all the names for the people who would be leaving for the city of Bremen. My name was never there, it was not written in my star, I still had to wait, things never went straight for me this was my fate.

On Friday I was resigned that I would have to wait for the next transport. I was upset because I did not want my friend to spend all this time for me, but he would always tell me: "leave me alone after all you are leaving so give me this chance to help you". I did not want to hurt him, I knew how noble his incentives were.

Sunday around one in the afternoon, when my friend came to see me again, we went down to the field, and that was the time when I got the news that I would be leaving Funk Kasserne for the city of Bremen.

The despair and happiness had no end. My friend left me at 2:00 clock, while I left at 2:30PM. I even had no chance to say goodbye to my other friends. When I got to the station my male friend was already there. My friend Mady was running around to get permission for me to be in the same car (these were cattle trains).

We were ten people to each car, we got mattresses and blankets, Bremen is a long way from Munich.

We arrived in Bremen late at night, and in the morning they transported us to a camp not far from the station.

During the entire journey my mind was occupied with the past. I kept on asking myself constantly: where are you going and what is the reason for it?

Why are you running away from Poland and why are leaving Germany?

I am forever running, escaping, getting farther away from this biggest cemetery, which Europe presents for all the Jews and me.

I know very well that I will never find peace, for me it will be the same wherever I go.

Right now I think about these new friends I met in Fohrenwald, and how I would lack myself in the room and read books or try to learn new languages so that I should not have to socialize. I looked for help but loneliness was my common companion, I was like a recluse who keeps away from people. My most happy moments were when I was left alone. However, this did not last very long, because of the accident I had at the ammunition factory my eyes gave me a lot of trouble, which lasted four months. I was under observation by Dr. Meserosz. So I could not read my books anymore.

So this forced me to make friends, especially with Mrs. Stein who was an exceptional listener. I told all about Mendi, Usi and many others, I remembered Erwin Klein, Dr. Pollak, and Dr. Spitzer, Dr. Szenker, Dr. Wildstein and Dr. Baran. I talked to her about the loss of Reginka.

I remembered all these people, and what role they played in my life after the end of the war during my bitter suffering. All this is moving like a panorama in front of my eyes, even though it has been a year since I am alone.

Right now I see this last stage of my life in Fohrenwald, how Berek, Fela and I went out to earn some money, we earned 1500DM which was a lot. Our trip Hanover, whose purpose was to look for my brother Chaim ended in a terrible disappointment.

Frankly speaking I really do not want any changes any more, they never have anything good in store for me.

During my journey I sang my famous song the "Wagony" (Trains), which reminded me of the German times when we traveled in the cattle trains. My journey to

Auschwitz, Bergen\Belsen, Elsnig\Elbe and of course the last trip from Esnig\Elbe the unforgotten April 20,1945, which broke my heart forever.

Right now I am in the port of Bremen, the long days without having anything to do brings back our past constantly, which poisons my brain. I make myself reproaches because of the death of my dear sister. Believe me Reginka that I constantly relive the terrible scene from the beginning to the end.

Then I have this new problem because I am afraid of meeting my family in NY to whom I have to reveal the painful truth about our entire family. I also question whether I will get along with my family, which I never met before, will I feel like a total stranger.

My cardinal wish that I should not be dependent on anybody, that I should be able to support myself, even if it means to live on a piece of bread and water. This was my fear when I was returning to Poland for the first time after the war.

I hate charity, I hate a handout, and I would feel degraded like a beggar if this should happen to me. I would hate myself if I had to depend on somebody else, even though financial situation plays an integral roll in our life, it always settles the life any home.

My next wish is that I would like to go to a hospital and have my shrapnel's removed, so that I should put an end to my wounds.

And the third wish is that I wish for freedom, freedom of movement, freedom of thought, heart, soul, just be free not to be a slave anymore.

And then comes my wish to be able to send papers, affidavits to all those people who helped me during these difficult moment and reward them by helping them to come to America.

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MY 1978 TRIP TO LODZ

JFK Sunday May 1978, the plane was delayed because a terrible down pour. Finally at 10:47 the plane took off for Amsterdam.

We were part of a Chasidic group that was going to Poland to visit the graves of famous Rabbis. The Chasidim sat pretty close to us. When it was time to daven (pray), they sure made a lot of commotion. They marched to the first class to pray and they made themselves at home. It did not take much time, and they were asked to leave the first class. While wearing their talesim and tefilim (Shalls and Philactes), they returned to our compartment. The only choice they had was to pray in their seats, but a few of them got permission to pray in the kitchen so they could finish their prayers. One of them by name of Favel insisted on having his own way, but he did not get it. They were very obnoxious, and we were very embarrassed. After all they were not the only once in this plane, in fact the majority of the passengers were not even Jewish.

Their behavior cause a lot to be desired, things could have been done in a different way, and nobody would have to be embarrassed. The plane ride was nice and smooth. Because of the bad weather in New York, the plane could not take off on time. We arrived in Amsterdam pretty late, and we missed our connection to Vienna. They offered us a connecting flight to Berlin. Well, you know probably how I feel about Germany.

We told them that for no money in the world will we go to Berlin. I guess our intervention helped, because Mr. Reichberg Jr. got us a direct flight to Poland via LOT. However, we had to wait for at least five hours for the LOT flight.

This of course left us with a lot of free time. The Chasidim had more nerve than we did, Mr. Fajvel arranged a sightseeing tour of Amsterdam, free of charge from KLM, which they called a mini tour.

First he took us trough the street of Amsterdam, which is a very old city, surrounded with canals. In fact when we got to one of the places, our bus had to stop, and so did entire traffic, because a bunch of boats had to pass by through the canal. I found it very interesting this was the first time in my life that I saw a city with so many canals. Our guide explained, that the city of Amsterdam has two thousand water houses or river houses, in which people live all year round.

After riding around for a while the Chasidim asked the driver to take us to the old cemetery. The Jewish cemetery in Amsterdam is one of the oldest in Holland. When we got to the cemetery the Chasidim were looking for a specific grave. There are many famous Rabbis buried in this cemetery, they visited some of them. However they were looking for the grave of the famous Rabbi Simon Aria. All the Chasidim lit candles there, and said ten Capitals Techilim (Psalms) Cesia and I also lit a candle, and we hoped that G-d would listen to our prayers.

This cemetery dated back to the fourteen hundred, the graves are all beaten up. We noticed that the community is trying hard to reinforce all these monuments with iron bars. The Chasidim were still looking for a specific grave and could not find it, just then I spotted a grave with two iron doors. It looked like in the old fashion bakery doors, and there were a lot of burned out candles on the ground.

When the Chasidim came back I pointed this grave out to them, they said, that this exactly the grave they were looking for. So again they prayed and said many Chapters Tehilim again. Cesia and I also said our prayers again, even though we never found out who was buried in this grave.

When we returned to the airport, they served us a late lunch.

These were strictly kosher sandwiches sent by the Jewish Committee of Amsterdam for which we did not have to pay. From what we could see on our tour, Amsterdam was a very clean and old city. In each window there were beautiful white curtains. The houses and the streets were spotless. To me it looked like fairy tale city. All in all it was an interesting excursion, and we surely utilized the time between catching the connecting flight to Poland.

And then it was time for us to board the plane, and we were on our way to Warsaw Poland. The LOT plane was small, it reminded me of the of the shuttle plane which I took from Sydney to Melbourne Australia. It was a smooth ride that took two hours. The passengers in this plane were mostly Polish, for all you could hear was: prosze Pani, prosze Pana, this sounded very strange to me I did not hear these words for at least thirty five years. We arrived in Warsaw at about 9:00 P.M. The airport was dark it was and dingy like in some far away places where there is no civilization. One could hardly see anything, as if this was fifty years ago, some place in a small town and not in the capital city of Poland. Then they lead us into the arrival building, which looked like an empty garage, the lights were so bad, that it was hard to read anything. There were soldiers all over, at the doors, at the lines, at the custom booths everywhere.

The Polish passengers had a very worried look on their faces, and that is when we began to worry too, as if to say what is next? We did not dare to speak up or ask questions, the mood was so somber and sad just like the looks of this garage room which served as an arrival hall.

We waited for our next, and were moving forward towards the custom booth, to check our visa and passport. The only people who seemed not to be afraid were the Chasidim. They behaved just like they did on the plane, as if they owned the place, they did not give a hoot. In fact they were already making arrangements for a bus to take them to Nowy Sanch.

Cesia, Zysio and I approached the booth together. There sat this Polish soldier with his pucker face. Cesia gave him her passport and the visa voucher. The soldier out of politeness greeted her: "What happen to your visa was in the laundry"? He said to her in Polish. Cesia told him that this happened during the rain in New York, but he did not react to it. Then it was my next, he checked my passport and visa, and I moved on. Then Zysio had his passport and visa checked and we were ready for the next control. We could see around us many detective, different agents ready to clobber somebody. Again we had to stand in line, so that they could check our luggage. We were petrified, we did not know what to expect. We looked at each other, and our fright was all over our faces, we could not camouflage it.

Zysio was the first one to go, the custom officer was very nasty to him, what do you expect from these Poles, they hate our guts. Then was my next, since the custom officer was busy on my left I asked him whether I could go to the one on my right, no he said you stay right here. He asked me about money, and I showed him the voucher for the exchange of dollars to zlotys. Then he asked me about the tissues, what is that? He said, a sealed box of tissues I answered, and I cut the box open and, he laughed, he did not open my suitcase.

Finally we were outside the custom house. It was pitch black, as if to add to their decor of fear, we really did not know what was flying. Suddenly we heard a man say: "I will take you, here is a taxi, so we said O.K. He loaded our suitcases in his trunk, and barricaded the rest of our luggage inside the taxi, so that I hardly had a place to sit. We asked him questions about the streets etc. He was not very friendly. All he was interested is that he should be paid in dollars, and that we should hire him for wherever we want to go.

Zysio made me write down the license number then I had to add his name and telephone number. He practically begged us to hire him. Zysio told him that he would call him, and that he should not try to call us, and this way we got rid of him. The ride to the hotel was very short, the streets looked pretty good from whatever we could see at night.

The hotel was located in the center of town, a pretty modern up-to-date hotel, it was built only three years ago. This was the Forum Hotel which is an Intercontinental Hotel, so it looked like an average American hotel.

When we got to our room, we were anxious to get into the shower, and to go to sleep, this was a very long day and night for us. We were on our feet since four clock Sunday. We were so tired that when we woke up we were completely disoriented, we did not know where we were. We got dressed very quickly, went down for breakfast. The hotel was practically empty, but there was no waiter nor waitress to be found. After a long wait we finally got somebody to take our order. The first thing they did is to check off our voucher, and then it took another half an hour to get our order. All that for a simple country breakfast soft boiled egg, bread cottage cheese and coffee. We had no choice, these were the only kosher items we could eat, not very appetizing. But when you are hungry even this breakfast tasted good.

After breakfast we took a taxi to the Jewish Committee, which was located on Twarda Street. This was a horrible sight, the Jewish Committee in the city of Warsaw. Before World War Two, there were five hundred thousand Jewish inhabitants. The Jews were the owners of large real estates, and look what they gave them for the Jewish

Committee? A dilapidated building, this building was condemned to go down, because it was ready to collapse. And that is the only building they allocated to the Jews.

Zisio wanted us to see the kitchen, so we climbed the steps to the first floor. Zysio took us to the office, which was on the same floor. The floor consisted of wooden boards that were so thin, that when you stepped on it, you had the feeling that you would go right through and land on floor beneath.

The office was in a two by nothing room, there were two desks facing each other. At one sat Mr. Karnacki who represented the Jewish Committee in Warsaw. The other desk was not occupied. The typewriter that stood on this desk was from the year one. To Mr. Karnacki's left was the telephone, and to his right was an adding machine, which was probably one hundred years old. One wall had some cheap shelves, on which Mr. Karnacki kept his correspondence. Then there was an empty room that lead into another room (if this could be called such), here sat Mr. Karnacki's secretary. The secretary also had a telephone on her desk as well as a typewriter. I bet you, that this typewriter must have been from the first one ever manufactured.

Mr. Karnacki was a very fine and polite gentlemen, he did not know what to do for Zysio. He was very kind to him, and was willing to do anything Zysio wanted. One could tell that he was very sincere, there was no put on, in fact one could actually feel his

willingness to help Zysio, Mr. Karnacki tried very hard, but there was little he could do, because it was already late, and we were in a hurry to go to Lodz.

I was very depressed when we left this office. And I asked myself "Is this what is left of Polish Jewry in Warsaw"? There is nobody else but a none Jew to be at the helm of the Jewish Committee in Warsaw? Well, that's exactly what happened. They killed all the Jews except for a handful who are here only in person, but in reality death like the all the others who did not survive.

On the way out of Mr. Kanrnacki's office Zysio said let me show you the famous Warsaw Communal Jewish Kitchen. He opened the door, and what did we see a dirty wooden room with a heap of potato peels on the floor. Don't forget this was locked so nobody could see this dirt, they opened the door for us the foreigners. In this kitchen we saw three dirty gentile women wearying dirty white aprons, just looking at them one could puke. Then they showed us the dinning room, there were a few long tables and chairs, not too bad.

After this tour Mr. Seidman asked the caretaker to show us the Shul. Along came this tall Pollak with a Russian embroider yarmulka on his head, with a red pimples face. I bet you must have had a venereal disease, he took the keys and lead us into the Shul.

The Shul had a dilapidated interior, the walls were cemented in, as if to fill in some of the holes. There were no more colored windows, just plain white once were left. You could see the remnants of a Spanish decor, of whatever there was left of this Shul. The ladies section was as in any European Shul upstairs. It too had patches of cement all over, with a small curtain to the left as a Mechitza. It is a miracle that this Shul is still standing, there is a story that goes with it. The Germans used this Shul for a stable, and that is the reason that this Shul survived.

We were told that Moshe Kusewitski, Hershman, and many other famous cantors sung here in this Shul, and now it looked like HURBAN. We did not stay here too long, we just took a few pictures, for we knew that we would return here again.

Finally we were ready to go to Lodz. Mr. Cywiak got a taxi for us on Grzybowska street. We asked the taxi driver how much he would charge for a round trip to Lodz, and he said that he wants 3,000 zlotys, so we took the taxi and off to Lodz we went. It was a nice ride. On the way we read signs of different towns so well known to us, as if we just left Poland. We passed beautiful fields, forests, but there were no Jews to be seen. There were no Jewish children playing, singing, laughing or crying, how could all this happen, how was it possible to annihilate the entire Jewish

population in Poland? I could not believe this cold feeling what I witnessed, by simply looking around. And as we were getting close to Lodz, my heart was pumping harder and harder, I was afraid of the confrontation.

As we continued our journey we were passing farmers with their horse and bogies, we saw farmers plowing their fields, just like they did one hundred years ago. On the fields we saw young and old work hard to make their fields grow well. We were told by our driver, that the farmers were the richest people in Poland, because the government was tried to keep them on the farm. It seems that most people wanted to live in big cities, and that creates a shortage of farmers, and therefore a shortage of produce. So they overlook the farmer and that way the farmer can make some extra money, which is the only private industry in Poland.

Suddenly we were stuck behind some cars, we thought that there was an accident, but before we knew, we were stuck before a horse and wagon. The driver was pushing the horse up the hill, and protecting the horse from the motor vehicles. Instead of veering to the right, he created a traffic jam and nobody could pass him. We could not believe it in this day and age one should act as if this was the nineteen century, and not 1978? The driver was

shielding the horse from the traffic as if they never saw a car, this was really a medieval seen.

At last we were able to pass this old fashioned driver and continue on our way to Lodz.

The closer we were getting to Lodz the greater was our anxiety. All those well known to us places and names, where we spent our summer vacations, our childhood. Then came the big signs of the outskirts of Lodz. Our driver had to ask some people how to approach the cemetery. When we got to the cemetery the main gate was closed, so we had to drive around. We came to the side entrance where the "Dzialkis" were in the ghetto, and where they still exist today just like we had them thirty five years ago, they inherited them from us the Jewish people. We stopped the car, and trembling we opened the small door. By the way when we approached the cemetery, we saw a bunch of teenagers jump over the brick fence. In their hands they all had big shopping bags, as if they were ready to steal something. We did not pay too much attention to them, but later on we saw that they were stealing the marble of the monuments. When we opened the door, there was a German shepherd barking away, he was tied to his small quarters. All over there chickens and pigs walking around, a real honorable place for the death. To the right were the living quarters for the caretaker, on the left was the outhouse, and further to the right

was a little vegetable garden. As we got closer we saw the funeral home to the right, and in front of was the big brick fence to the cemetery with the big iron gate across from the funeral home. One could see that at one time this was a well taken care place, but after thirty five years, with no Jews to care of it, it sure looked bad. To the left of the cemetery we saw something new. There was this small monument, built for the Lodzer people who were killed on the AKKEDAS AUSCHWITZ, TREBLINKA, MAJDANEK, CHELMNO ETS. And of course the people of the Lodzer ghetto who died on KIDUSH

H". This is a very simple monument.

After we spent sometime at this monument, we entered the cemetery, that is when I noticed the caretaker who was walking with another couple. This couple came from South America to visit some of their relative's grave, but the caretaker could not find the grave for them. In his hand the caretaker carried a cardboard which was supposed to have the map or plan of the graves. Mr.Kaczmarek who was the caretaker was very angry at Cesia and me because we went into the funeral home and took pictures of all the chickens and pigs. He made a barn out of our holy funeral home and he did not like anybody to see what he did with it.

This was a sight that no Jew would believe it unless he would see it himself.

The place stunk from the escrement, just like in chicken coop. In the middle you could see that they set up the place for an eventual funeral, what a laugh? What a tragic sight, just like the Jews of Lodz, but this was only the beginning. When Mr. Kaczmarek and the Brazilian couple came to us, Mr. Kaczmarek smelled of alcohol, which for us Polish Jews this was nothing new. We all knew that alcohol is every Poles love, and that most Poles are boozers, especially men. And again he started to yell at Cesia and me, you had no right to go to funeral home, you have no right to be in this cemetery alone. He just kept on, and on, and on. I guess he doesn't want to miss the commission, and that is why he gave us this whole speech. When he was finished with his speech, I showed him the little card on which I wrote down my father's grave number. I remembered the direction, but he stopped me, and said : "this does not exist anymore". You better don't go there, because the bodies were exhumed, that part of the cemetery is no more. My face changed colors, I was speechless, and for a moment all I could think of was: "and all my travels were in vain"? My dear father's grave perished like the rest of my family"? I felt as if I was paralyzed, stoned. After a few minutes, I said to the rest of them, I have to go and see for myself. I started walking in the direction, that I used to come and visit my father's grave in the ghetto. I came to the first Ohel and looked at the grave, but there was none. In the mean time Mr. Kaczmarek, as well as Zysio

and Cesia followed me all the time. Then I asked the caretaker whether there were other Ohels in this direction, yes he said yes.

So I continued looking for my father's grave. There were wild wheats all over, they grew so high that they covered most of the graves, as well as half way into the Ohel. Nobody bothered to clean them, these were orphaned graves, orphaned just like we were orphaned. Then I came to this big brick Ohel, and looked at the adjacent grave, which was covered with lots of wheat's, I tried to push them away, so I could see who was buried there. So Zysio and I tried to read the inscription, and right there we both saw G/IV 23/I next to it, it read ICCHAK ARON FLATTO, which was very difficult to see, you could barely make it out. I fell on my father's grave and was very happy that my trip was not in vain. The grave and his Mitzewah if you can call it such was all broken up. All these years in America I was very happy that my cousin Hanka put up the Mitzewah for my father, and that at least he had a decent Mitzewah, like most people on the Lodzer cemetery. I wrote my cousin in Poland, that I would send all the money necessary for a nice Mitzewah. When I saw this little plaque, my disappointment had no limits.

I expected an upright Mitzewah, and told her to use the same inscription which we put on the metal sheet, that was standing there when I came back after the war. This metal tablet we made

for my father's grave, after the year was over which meant, in about Januaary 1944. This was a little tablet made out of cement, which could burly burly accommodate his name, and of course, there was a little bed built around the grave. What a sight my father the famous ICCHACK ARON FLATTO lying there, can you imagine what kind of a Mitzewah he would have had if I would have taken care of it? His grave looked like the rest of my family, and all the Jews of Poland. After I had my cry and after I said Tehilim, as well as my personal prayers, I felt that it's not I who is the orphan, but father is. Nobody comes to see him, and nobody cares about his grave, it is just left alone, alone like I. I recall that when I came to this grave thirty three years ago, when the metal tablet after only one year covered his grave, as if to say: "Who needs my name, my family is death so who will come to visit my grave"? And now again I am witnessing the same sight. Once again my father's grave is orphaned, for there is nobody left from my immediate family, the Nazis killed them all, only I alone survived by a miracle. It surely is a lonely and hard life to be left alone. I started to pool the wheat's as best as I could, and while sitting I said to myself that I would try to move my father's grave to Israel, and let his remains rest in Jewish soil. Even though that my father's parents and most of his family are buried in the Lodzer cemetery, as well as my maternal grandmother. I did not want any part of this cursed country, and surely did not want

my beloved father's remains to be part of a future highway. If I would have been very rich I would have done the same with my dear Grandma Mariem.

The rest of my family that died in the ghetto are buried to the right of my father's grave and nobody knows where they are buried. The entire part of the cemetery which they used in the ghetto had no Mitzewos, they just had a small marker which disappeared with time. From what I was told is that they try to make individual beds, and mark them with names, but that does not mean that this person is buried there.

Zysio spoke with Mr. Kaczmarek and asked him whether this grave could be cleaned and repaired, and also to have the name retouched. Mr. Kaczmarek promised that if we will pay him, he will do it this week.

Zysio and Cesia left me on my father's grave and they went to their father's grave which was just a few rows away from my father's grave. They could not find the grave, after an hour they asked Mr. Kaczmarek to help them, and he took them to their father's grave. Cesia was very angry with her brother, how could he forget the place, he was here only a year and a half ago, why did he not remember. However, there was a reason for it, the graves around this one were all broken up, and parts of them were missing, just like the majority of the graves. These hoodlums don't even let the death Jews rest in peace.

I was very happy that I was left alone at my father's grave, I continued to pray, and tell my father about my sad end. How G-d left me alone, and how I tried to keep up his teachings. And how I wish he could see my children, and be proud of the heritage he left me and them. I told him, that my beloved mother, his devoted wife and children. Lajser, Chaim and Reginka none of them have a grave. When we got to the cemetery the weather was nice and sunny, and now the skies turned black, and the rain started to come down. It looked to me as if the sky was crying with me.

While I was sitting at the grave Felix the taxi driver carried on a conversation with the caretaker, he was explaining to Felix that this side of the cemetery was reserved only for the very religious and pious men. In fact he said you see this house, that's where Rabbi Borenstein buried. He continued that before the war, there was a cantor sitting there and people used to come there with their problems etc. The cantor would say a prayer in their behalf and would make an El-Mol_rahamim. Then he went on, on the other side, are graves of the very rich and □ □progressive Jews. I went into the Ohel to see who was buried there, but there was nothing to verify that Rabbi Borenstein the great Zadik was buried there. Gone was the marble with the inscription, gone was the special saying that described this Rabbi and his great accomplishments.

The hood looms, the hooligans stole everything and left the bare brick walls which they could not take with them.

Mr. Kaczmarek was right the other side was the place where the very rich Jews were buried, the Poznanskis, the Silversteins, the Hertz's and many many others. They had their own marble mausoleums. I have never seen any like that in New York. When Cesia and Zysio returned from their father's grave I asked Zysio to make an EL-Mol-RACHAMIN, and he mentioned my entire family's names.

Then we left, we had to go and see Mr. Kaczmarek. So Zysio and I went into Mr. Kaczmarek's quarters, while Cesia and Felix stood outside.

He took me into this dirty room which had a curtain on a thin string dividing the room. I guess somebody else was using the other part of the room as a sleeping quarter. There was a table and two chairs, the dirt and fowl odor drove me insane. In the mean time his pregnant daughter in-law came in. She was carrying wash, I could not believe that they did any washing, that's how filthy the place was. They were very cordial, I guess they knew that we would leave them some American dollars behind. Zysio made up with him, that he would retouch the name on my father's grave, and I gave him a deposit, \$10.00 Dollars, with the understanding that we would return on Friday. This brought our first visit to the Lodzer cemetery to an end.

As we were walking out of the cemetery I realized that this was Okopowa Street on which Lajzer had his small room. The reason for it was that he had TB, and the air was much better on Marysin. This way my brother did not have to live in the stinking center of the ghetto, where there were no trees, where the air was contaminated. I remember well his little room on Okopowa 138, there was hardly any place for his bed, stove, and the few shelves. I can still remember how my dear mother used to go there, to cook for him, with what there was available to cook, so that he should have a meal and not go around hungry. Whenever I had a day off, I would go there and stay with them for the day, it was great to be together. When the time came for me to return to our home, my beloved mother would walk me all the way to Marysinska Street, where I used to take the trollycar back home to Brzezinska and Franciszkanska Street. And then I would wait for my next day off, so we could be together again.

After we left the cemetery, none of us felt like talking. Each of us was clammed in into our own private treasures. The rain was falling, as if the whole world was crying with us. We told Felix our taxi driver, that we would like to go and see some streets where we used to live in the ghetto. So first we had to find Zgierska street, which we knew was near the Church on Platz

Koscielny. Zysio and Cesia recognized the house in which they lived in the ghetto. Then I asked him to go to Zgierska 48, which was my grandfather's building. This was the last building that was still standing there. before Limanowskiego street, which is opposite the Baluter Ring, or as they called in Polish Baludzki Rynek, The Baluty market. Then Felix made a U-turn, we went back to Zgierska, which was on our way to the city. We passed very familiar places however, the way we left them thirty four years ago, that's the way they ☐ looked today, nothing added, nothing changed. Then we approached Lutomierska Street where the bridge used to be, and Drewnowska Street. Everything looked the same, but our people were not there, there was no Jew to be seen. All I could hear, is the familiar sound of the wooden shoes, ascending the steps of the bridge. It was so real in my head as if I was there with them every morning and every evening. Right now I was in a different world.

We continued on Zgierska which became Nowomiejska street, and suddenly we came to a place full of trees and benches all around it. People were sitting on the benches and talking, from far we could see Ogrodowa street and Poznanski's palace, which was given by the Poznanskis to a Poles to house the Wojewodztwo, which is like State Building. The Germans used it as a Comendatura. This side of Nowomiejska was made into a square park. Gone are all the

Jewish businesses, gone are all the Jewish buildings, gone are all the beautiful stores. We continued to Legionow (Zielona). The traffic was unbelievable. The cars and the trollies, it took forever to cross the town. This part of Lodz did not look anything like the Lodz we used to know. For some reason or other we had to come back via Gdanska Street.

This gave me an opportunity to see the house where I used to live before the war. The streets looked very poor, and dilapidated, very depressing. I tried to find our building, but I could not find the garden which was right in the front. The garden was between the prison and the precinct, but there was none to be found. Finally I left the taxi, and said even though there is a new front, there it still says Gdanska 15, so I will go and see what's going on inside. I entered the building, and sure enough as soon as I saw the garden on my left and the long sidewalk in front of me, then I knew that this is the place where I used to live. So I walked on the sidewalk like I did so many times forty years ago, before we had to leave this place for the ghetto. The building did not change much, whoever takes care of it is doing a pretty good job. I walked to the front of our apartment, I went to the third courtyard, there was a little garden in front of our windows. I did not dare knock at the door, my pain would have been so much harder to take. I did not want to hurt myself more than I did

already. The garden on the left with its trees is still there, and the benches on which my family and I spent so many happy moments, all is gone, left are only new people, who do not know our pain, our sufferings, and our past.

I took some pictures, but unfortunately, none of them came out. As I turned around I saw this tall blond man for a moment, he looked like a stranger, but then I realized that, it was Zygmund, Grzegorzowa son. I did not say anything to him, I was not going to give him the satisfaction that I came back to see my home, that I cared. Let them all go where my family went, they sure deserve, especially his father, and his mother who worked hand and hand with the Germans. None of them tried to help us in these difficult times, and there were plenty of opportunities that they could have helped us. I still remember the how do you do they gave me, when I returned after the war. They did not even offer me a piece of bread. After the war instead of being Falk-Deutsche, they became Ukrainian, what a nice game they all played.

There was nothing left for me, I had no desire to start a conversation, let them all stew in their own poverty. After this visit we went around to Zysio and Cesia's pre-war home. They looked around took pictures and they went upstairs to the apartment. The woman opened the door, and showed them in. She tried to tell them, that she only lives there since after the war,

there was a German officer living there before her during the war. She offered them some tea, but naturally they refused the offer.

When we were finished with our homes, we took a ride on Piotrkowska Street. We paraded and tried to walk to the famous Grand Hotel. The streets in Lodz were packed with people, there was no room on the sidewalks. The pedestrians were pushing to move forward. One could hardly see any old people, and everybody was pregnant. Piotrkowska is nothing like it used to be before the war, the streets are dirty, poor looking, there are no fancy jewelry stores, clothing stores, fancy linen stores, no crystal stores. Nothing all gone just a narrow drab looking street, with a lot of young people.

Gone are the Piotrkowska Jewish stores, gone is the Jewish business, there is no Jewish language to be heard any place. There are no Jews here anymore and they will probably never return. The Poles always wanted a Poland without Jews, so now they have a Poland without Jews, let them keep it. I could not believe how poor and dirty Lodz looks. A city that was full of hustle and bustle, a city that was full of life, what happened? When we walked into the Grand Hotel, which to Lodz it was like the World of Astoria in New York. What happened to this prestigious hotel? The hotel looked depressing, nothing was done there in fifty years. The wall paper was torn, the paint was peeling, the

furniture was broken. What was left was a broken down hotel, with it's musty smell. There were people sitting at the bar drinking the usual Polish way.

We had a drink of soda, for that would be the only thing we would dare to have there. Felix ate a regular meal there. After Felix was finished with his meal we started our journey back to Warsaw. As we sat in the taxi we hardly talked to each other. This was a very painful experience, it was very difficult for us to realize that this is the unfortunate truth about the Polish Jewry, which we have to face. By the time we got back to the hotel, it was pretty late. We went up to our rooms, we took showers, and then we called for room service. All we asked for was tea. We were very tired, so we went to sleep, because we planned to go to Auschwitz early in the morning . We were exhausted from our first visit to Lodz, no matter how well we were prepared for the situation in Lodz, it is one thing to read about it and one thing to experience it.

The next visit in our plan was a visit to Auschwitz. We left Warsaw early in the morning, destination-AUSCHWITZ. It was a beautiful day in May, the sun was shining bright, and the skies were blue, there were no clouds in the sky. We still used the same taxi driver, who tried very hard to be kind to us. He tried to make conversation with us, but none of us was in the mood to talk.

We anticipated Auschwitz, and since all of us were there in 1944, it was difficult for us to think about anything else. That is the place where most of our families were killed, this is one of the biggest Jewish cemeteries in all of Europe. We were passing famous places, famous Jewish small and large cities well known to us from history. We looked left and right, no Jew to be seen, no Jewish faces any place, all we saw were Poles, young, old any age. No place could we find a Jew, not even one single Jew, how could this have happened? The Jews lived in Poland for almost one thousand years, well the Poles got their wish, a Poland without Jews. This was a very long ride by twelve o'clock in the afternoon, we were first passing cities so well known to us. We were passing the town of Czestochowa, Ostrowiec, Sosnowiec, Katowice and finally Krakaw. Again Felix tried to speak with us, but our minds were some place else, we anticipated our encounter with Auschwitz. And then Felix pulled over to the side of the road, he took out a map to make sure that we were going the right way.

Half an hour later we came to this tremendous parking lot, this did not look familiar to us. Felix told us that this is Auschwitz. I assumed that this was built for the tourists. The tourists who came to witness our tragedy. Auschwitz became a world reknown museum for all the tourists, whereas for us Auschwitz is our cemetery, a cemetery where our beloved families were killed on

Kidush Ha-Shem. We got out of the taxi, and as we walked a little, there it was, the famous "DEATH FACTORY"- AUSCHWITZ, With the famous sign on the iron gate: "ARBEIT MACHT DAS LABEN SUESS". The first building was the quarters for the mighty officers and staff. Here they worked and lived, here were their private quarters a big brick building. the entire camp was fenced in with high tension electric wires. The wooden building in the front was where the bunkers were. And then was a stretch of brick barracks. Originally this was an Austrian army base, which the Germans took over and changed it to suit their own means. Today each barrack is called for different nationality that was enslaved in Auschwitz. So we started on our left, each one of them showed the terrible sufferings and atrocities committed on our Jewish brothers and sisters. The guide does not mention Jews, he only mostly tells you about the going on that took place in these barracks. On the walls they have pictures posted of their own Poles, here and there they throw a word of how many Jews died there. They elaborate a lot of how their priests suffered, but there is no mention of what was done to our rabbis. To our best and holiest, righteous Jews, who were killed, tortured for no other crime, but for the fact that they were Jews.

They showed us the Chamber of Horrors, and how they tortured the slaves in these two by two cubicles, which were in the cellars, where there was nothing else left for them. But to suffocate. It

sure took a whole science to figure this out. Imagine a science of how to torture and murder human beings, innocent human beings in this twentieth century of ours. If the walls could talk, there would be a unlimited amount of books to tell about the human sufferings in these bestial quarters. I bet that cassette tapes would keep on going on and on without a stop. For it took five years of constant torture of millions of people who went through these camps, and there is only a handful of people who survived these massacres, and are able to tell this story.

They showed us the guillotine, where they chopped off people's heads, or did the hangings. How can we believe these things, we the survivors, we could have been the once?

They showed us the "DEATH WALL", where they would line up people, and shoot each person, while the other would watch, and think of their next. We all stood there and our tears were chocking us, to us the survivors this place is not a museum as it is to the average tourist. Here at this wall, at these chamber horrors, at this death wall, at this crematorium, our Jewish mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, uncles, aunts, cousins grandmothers, grandfathers and our friends were swallowed, killed on Kidush Ha Shem and nobody did anything to stop these bestial Nazi murderers from finishing their Juden Vernichtung. The world just looked on and probably was very happy, that there were less Jews to worry about. I recall that when the World War Two was over, they used to

say that Churchill and Roosevelt were very angry with Hitler, not so much because of the war, but because of the fact that he still left a small contingency of Jews behind. So how could we just stand there and watch thousand and thousands of shoes, thousand and thousands of eye glasses. Suitcases, and finally talesim and other religious articles. This is our cemetery, and even that, they do not leave to us, and they refuse to admit that mostly Jews were killed in this hell. The grass grows here so high, there is no need for a fertilizer, every inch of this soil is full with our Jewish blood, the place is quiet peaceful, nobody disturbs the history that will never be told to us, as it really happened. Next they took to show us the crematorium.

People were putting flowers there, to show their respects. But how can you imagine all the people who were in this gas chamber. How can one think of what their feelings were, and what were their thoughts before they died? All we know that according to the people who worked there, their last words were Shma-Israel etc. Ribono Shell Olam, where were you then? These were Your Jewish children, Your chosen people. Why did you not listen to their cries, and their prayers: You let your people die like sheep, but before we died we first had to suffer, and pay for our sins. Wasn't this too much? We are your children Am Israel.

I can hardly believe the things I saw here, how much and how long were we to suffer? I know that the Jews in Mitzraim (Egypt) asked the same question, and I am sure that the same cry came out of the Jews in Spain at the Santa Fe, but this for sure was the worst Gezejra of them all. Six million Jews perished in this hell, and the world looked on and did nothing. I think that every American Jew should come here and see this for himself, maybe this will make him a better Jew? Maybe after seeing all this, he will realize that no matter how much he will assimilate to the rest of the world he will always remain a Jew. Once born a Jew always a Jew, and every Haman, every Hitler tries to prove it to us. So it is time practice our own religion, our own heritage, enough of suffering, the Gentile world does not want us.

After we left these barracks, we went to the office, for we wanted to see the Jewish barrack, which of course was closed to the public. Poland is not interested to educate of what happened to their Own Jews and the rest of the European Jewry, all they are interested is to show the public how they suffered during this terrible war. I believe that eventually they will completely erase any trace of Jews ever being killed in Auschwitz. Zysio went to the office and showed them some letters, after lengthy explanation, they agreed to show us the Jewish barrack. A woman lawyer who was directly involved in the creation of this block number 26 a Miss America opened this barrack and took us into it.

This barrack smelled of cement and paint, it has not yet been completed. The interior of the building is black and white, with very dim lights all over. It actually follows the theme of Yad-Vashem. The walls are covered with black and white pictures, depicting the plight of the Jewish people, beginning with 1933-1945. Here and there you can see some Tefilim and sidurim under a glass case all in all it was not very impressive. This place does not bring out the truth of the degree of the Jewish sufferings. It looks more like a newsreel. there are Televisions which are hooked up to show some films or other incidentals. Again I don't expect the Poles to advertise our plight, however, they cannot ignore the Jewish tragedy completely, so they gave us one barrack. They gave us one barrack like they did to the French, Belgium, Russians and others, so there is a Jewish barrack instead of an Israeli barrack. The fact is that the majority of the people killed in Auschwitz were Jews and not the others.

Zysio asked who was instrumental in opening of this building and she named some people from Yad-Vashem. This concluded our visit to Auschwitz, we had a hard time to leave this place. We went into the bookstore and bought some Polish and English books about Auschwitz. When we got back to the parking lot it was full of cars and buses. There were lots of people of different nationalities. And there were also a lot of school children. In a way I was happy

that they bring these kids here, let them see what kind of beasts these Nazis were and still are. □ □After this visit we decided to visit our own cemetery, where our mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters perished from the hands of the bestial Nazis.

This was B I R K E N A U today they call Brzezinka. Birkenau is two miles away from Auschwitz, we parked the car right in front of the famous "T O R". I can still remember when we arrive there at the end of August of 1944, we came to the side where there railroad tracks were, the place stretches for miles, and miles, and there are high tension electric fences all around the camp. Each camp was fenced in by itself, the barracks are still there as a remind of the death factory. There are barracks and barracks, it is a miracle that they did not fall apart, after all they were just wooden shacks. There are still the tall watch dogs, the watch towers, where the SS sat with their machine guns. I wanted to go in to the place where they had the crematorium, and say some Tehilim, but Zysio could hardly walk and it was already pretty late. Zysio decided against it, he said he would rather go to Cracaw before it gets too dark. Since I was outnumbered, I had no choice, I really wanted to see the memorial they built for the people who were killed there. My dear mother and my brother and rest of the family as well as all the other Jewish people who were murdered there. I wanted to say a prayer, but could not go there,

so I hope that the prayer will be accepted from here too. I love you all, and even if I do not talk about you all the time, you know best how much I loved you and always will love you no matter how many years will go by. My love for you is eternal and I hope that we will meet again when my Maker calls upon me. I stood in from of the camp and for the life of me I could not believe, that here where the grass now grows so high and where you do not hear a human voice, you just see the beautiful sky above this huge cemetery, was where I spent four weeks with my beloved sister. How could this be true? How could this Dante's Inferno become such a peaceful place? What happened to all the gas chambers? ammunition factories? Union and others? I guess Hitler had his choice. And now stands this shell of the DEATH FACTORY as a memorial to the human bestiality and I hope that it will be here a long time, so that all future generations should see what kind of animals those bastard Germans were between the years of 1933-1945. Let it be a reminder of what we have to fear and never again let it happen to mankind.

When we left Birkenau, we headed for Cracaw, our driver Felix was very tiered from driving and hungry, so we had to stop over for a bite. He took us to the city of Oswiencin, which is only a few kilometers from Birkenau. When we parked the car we heard a band playing some music, they looked like Salvation army. What a sight

this was, just a few miles away from the horror. Where were these people when all these atrocities took place? How could they just stand by idle? Our driver said that the city of Oswiecin should be bombed, for they sure were witnesses to everything. Wherever we looked there were bars, and dance halls, as if nothing ever happened around here, there was no sign of history of any atrocities that took place just few miles away from here, no trace. So we went in for a bite, after Felix had his supper we continued to Cracaw.

It took us one hour to get there. We could already see from far the Vavel. Last time I was in Cracaw was in 1945 in the Bnei-Akiba kibutz, where I stayed for a few weeks. I spent my first Yom Tov there after the war. After the holidays we left Poland with the Chevra, at the time we were sure that we would never return to this cursed country. Prior to that I was in Cracaw, when I was a little girl I came with my school for a three day exertion. I was so excited this was my first trip without my parents. We slept in a hostel, with lot and lots of other girls together, and we ate at a kosher restaurant. We had a lot of fun going to visit all the historical places, they even took us to the place where Pilsudski was buried. These were the old and happy days, but that was so long, long ago. Who could think of what was waiting for just a few years later?

Before we knew Felix pulled over in front of the Jewish cemetery. We got out of the car, and went to visit the graves of those people who were lucky to be buried according to the Jewish law, and have a grave of their own. We walked around and said Tehilm at various graves.

From there we went to the Jewish Square, to see the Ramoo Shul. The Shul was closed we had to wait for the gabai to open the door for us. It is actually a miracle that two Shuls were saved from the Nazis. Finally the gabai came and opened the Shul. It surely was a different Shul from what I ever saw in my life. This Shul is four hundred years old. The gabai told us that they get a minian of Shabath and Yom Tov, other than that it is very bad. There are very few Jews who live in Cracaw, and most of them are not interested in religion. The gabai took us up to the attic, the so called library. How depressing, he asked us to take these very rare books, but each one had a stamp, and we were afraid of the custom officers, so none of us took any of them. Adjacent to the Shul is the Ramoo cemetery, where Ramoo is buried, as well as other pious Jewish scholars. There is the grave of the famous Tosefus. We said Tehilim again, and walked around this small cemetery, which dates back to the Polish king Kazimierz Wielki, who welcomed the Jews to Poland. He gave them equal rights and showed them a lot of respect not like today nor at any other time in history after Kazimierz Wielki.

When we came out of the cemetery there were a few Polish Jews, they smelled American Jews, so they came to ask for money, which we gave them of course. Shortly after, arrived the Jewish President of Polish Jews a Mr. Jakubowicz, he welcomed us, especially Zysio with whom he has been together before. This concluded our outing for the day, and we started on our way back to Warsaw. This was a very taxing day for us. We were exhausted emotionally as well as physically. It was very, very hard to absorb our continues and renewed sufferings. We sat in the taxi and hardly said a word to each other. This one day round trip to Auschwitz and Cracaw, was a little too much for us.

We returned to Warsaw at twelve thirty at night. All of us went straight to bed, each one of us full of the bitter experience of today and the past. Next outing on our agenda was to visit the Warsaw ghetto and the Warsaw cemetery. Today we went to see the Warsaw ghetto, there is really nothing to see except the Monument. Which was built as Memorial to the people who perished in the ghetto, fighting for our freedom. And than there is the Bunker for Ari Anilewicz who died there and Mila 18. The Poles built a new complex of apartments on the grounds where there once was the Jewish ghetto. Everything is gone except the old cemetery on the Okopowa street, which we went to visit. As we were entering the cemetery there was a Polish woman who was bringing flowers for one

of the graves. Then we met Mr. Cywiak who was taking us around with some other Jew. They were showing us the grave of the Warsaw Rabbi, and other famous rabbis. I completely forgot I should have asked about the grave of my father's uncle who was a Rabbi in Warsaw on Praga, his name was Rabbi Shyja Flatto. And again we visited many graves and said Tehilim again. The cemetery was in very poor condition, nobody takes care of it, there are no Jews to do so, and the few that are, married to gentiles, and they have little feeling for their own Jews. The two Jews Warsaw Jews who were with us, were constantly fighting and calling each other names. It was terrible, they were in completion, each of them was waiting for a handout from us. It was so embarrassing that Felix the goy told them, that it is disrespectful to behave like that on a cemetery, what a shame.

R

CMENTARZ ZOSTAJE TYLKO

"CMENTARZEM"

GROBI ZOSTAJA TYLKO GROBAMI, ZOSTAJA

TYLKO WSPOMNIENIEM CZSOW PRZESZLYCH,

A NIE MIEJSCEM ZAMIESZKANIA.....

(ZYDZI) WRZOS ROSNIE TAK NISKO, ZE KAZDY PO NIM DEPTAC

MOZE.....

WLASNOSC: HANKI FLATTO

U.N.R.R.A TEAM 106

FOHRENWALD-DEUTCHLAND

szczęście? "Szczęście trzeba rwać jak świeże wiśnie, ze szczęście raz się uśmiecha, raz tylko swa dłoń podaje, gdy okazje te miniesz, toś przepadł no i zginiesz, bo szczęście było i mogłeś je mieć".

Wiem, że nie jeden raz miałam szczęście w reku i że ja życie nie powinam, uważałam, że każdy inny na moim miejscu skończyłby z sobą zaraz z miejsca, podczas tego kiedy ja żyję i cierpię aż do chwili ostatecznej, która będzie dla mnie prawdziwym oswobodzeniem.

Na chwilę, kiedy chce sobie samej pomóc, kiedy jestem gotowa do każdej walki o życie jak lew, ale niestety, gdy nadchodzi potrzeba staje się tak słaba i tak niezdolna, i tak nasycona nektarem życia, że nawet nie mam ochoty to tak pewnych przed chwilą zamiarów, które posiada i posiadać musi każda żyjąca jednostka w celu życia, jak to w języku potocznym nazywają: własności przyrodzone.

Trudno mi żyć z takim zapatrywaniem na świat, tak na rozdrożu, nigdy właściwie nie wiem czego mam chcieć od życia, gdyż wszystko zależy jest od moich zapatrywań, od moich poglądów, innaczej mówiąc od mojego pesymizmu, od stopnia pesymizmu, który mnie w takich chwilach opętał, bo niestety pesymistka jestem ciągle, mogę tylko być mniej albo więcej zrezygnowana.

Dla każdego normalnego człowieka istnieją tylko dwie alternatywy, to znaczy albo, albo, albo rzucić się w wir życia i walczyć o nie dzielnie jak żołnierz na posterunku, lub też zdobyć się na tak trudną odwagę, która trwać powinna kilka sekund- i skończyć z tym oto światem, skończyć z życiem co może uwolnić od wszelkich trosk, i bólów moralnych i fizycznych, bo stan ducha dla człowieka, który siłą faktu czy chce czy nie chce mimo woli żyje, nie może mu nic dać, Życie, bez celu może tylko istnieć u ludzi ciemnych, u zwierząt, ale u

1.5.46. "Przychodza w zyciu dni powodzen,gdy wszystko zdradz nas i zawodzi, gdy pociag szczescia w dal odchodzi i wraca zlo do miary twierdz".

W takim oto okresie ja dzis zyje, czuje,ze wszyscy i wszystko jest zdradliwe,ze prawda jest czynnikiem nie porzadany w dobie obecnej, ze ludzie tego pokroju nie maja racji bytu, ze zycie obecne dla takich oto ludzi jest i bedzie tylko meka. Szczerosc przestala ludziom imponowac, jej miejsce zajela obluda. Obluda w stosunku do kazdej nawet drobnostki.

Od chwili wyjscia z wagonow, zycie moje jest jednym dlugim lancuchem cierpien ,bolow moralnych if fizycznych. Czesto zadaje sobie pytanie czy nie lepiej byloby z tym zyciem skonczyc? Hanka czy Ci brak odwagi, podczas tego kiedy prawie ze nie masz nic do stracenia, kiedy nawet pies z kulawa noga nie bedzie za Toba tesknil i cierpial z tego powodu. Dlaczego nie potrafisz byc silna by sobie dopomoc?

I dlatego wlasnie przesladuje mnie jedynie mysl o smobojstwie, gnebi mnie to ze zycie skonczy samobojstwem i to nawet nie zadlugo.....

Z tego powodu cierpie bardzo, czuje sie mala, malenka, niezdolnado niczego, jestem tak niezaradna,tak nie dobra jak polglowek, co naprawde wywoluke na mnie,ze jestem takie nic.

Czemu tyle tysiecy ludzi, ktorzy znajduja sie w takich samych okolicznosciach jak ja, czemu oni moga sobie zycie ulozyc i znalezc szczescie w tym oto malym ciasnym kregu powojenym? Czemu ich zywnosc byla wieksza niz moja? Czyzby ja nalezala naprawde do grupy ludzi tak nieudolnych,tak malo inteligentnych zyciowo, ze nawet tej prostej wlasciwosci czlowieka nie posiadam? Dlaczego ja nie umiem sobie zycia ulozyc? czemu nie potrafie walczyć o nie, walczyć o moje

tych tez znajdzie sie zawsze jakis ped, za czymś, co własnie tworzy moje zycie, co własnie jest trescia mojego obecnego zycia i co wymagam od zycia. Co powinno i bedzie moim celem w zyciu obecnym. Prawda jest chcialabym sie uczyc, bo jedynie w nauce znajduje pewnego rodzaju zadowolenie, pewnego rodzaju ujscia moich cierpien, moich anormalnych objawow, ktore sa w moim terazniejszym zyciu, ryzykownym wynikiem, bo poprostu nic przez to nie zyskam i jednocześnie, zadnej ulgi przez to nie odczuwam. Jezeli chodzi o nauke, to oto tak bardzo przez mnie upragniona nauka to ona w tej chwili, wykluczona, ze wzgledu na moj wzrok, ktory mi w tej chwili (od 6-ci tygodni) nie pozwala to zn. ze mam chory wzrok.

Wiem i czuje ze wychowanie dzieci przynosi mi w czesci ulge, dzieci potrafia czlowiekowi zadowonic. Dzieci naleza do tych istot, ktore potrafia wplynac na czlowieka. To dziecko, ktore istnieje, to zydowskie dziecko, to osieroczone, ktore juz nigdy chyba nie zazna ciepla matczynej, tego troskliwego ciepla, to naprawde matczyne "das muterliche". To dziecko, moze przyniesc ulge osobie cierpiacej z tego samego powodu, to dziecko moze byc przyjacielem. Nieszczescie laczy ludzi, w nieszczesciu ludzie czuje sie tak blisko jak nikt na swiecie.

Pragne sobie pomoc, pragne ukojenia pragne uciucia cierpien ktore sa tak straszne, ktorych nikt nie jest w stanie zrozumiec, ktorych nikt nie jest w stanie mi ulzyc.

Przez to ze jestem tak bardzo cierpiaca, przez to moje wyodrebnienie o ludzi pozostalych, czuje sie zle, wiem ze tacy ludzie sa w spolecanstwie, nie porzadani od takich ludzi wszyscy odwracaja glowe, tacy ludzie staja sie nie ciekawi dla kazdego otoczenia, takich ludzi

nazywa sie ludzmi nydnymi, poprostu ludzie niepotrzebni, nie zdrowy element, ktory spoleczenstwu nic dac nie moze. Mimo wzystko nie potrafie sie przemoc, aczkolwiek jestem realistka i widze rzeczy takie jakie one sa. Nie weim co za zmora mnie trzyma, ze nie potrafie sie zmienic, sa chwile, kiedy chce czymś byc. Chce tez dac cos swiatu to moja marna osoba moglaby przecierz cos nie cos zrobic dla tak upragnionej budujacego sie panstwa zydzowskiego. Kazdy nawet najbardziej prymitywny czlowiek ma przeciez w sobie takie wlasciwosci, ktore moga spoleczenstwie cos dac. W jakiejkolwiek bylo nie bylo postaci, czy przez prace fizyczna, czy przez prace umyslowa..

Kazda jednostka przy dobrych checicach moze byc produktywna i dlatego wlasnie, gdy o tym pomysle, boli mnie bardzo stanowisko mojej osoby w obecnym czasie. Takie wielkie zero moralne, takie wielkie nic, tak bardzo bierna jestem, ktorej przyczyna jest moj stan ducha , ktory czy chce czy nie chce, wciaz panuje nademna. Gdy otym pomysle wstyd mi przedemna sama, wstydze sie swojego zastoju duchowego, swojego zaparcia sie we wszelkich dziedzinach.

15.1.46. I minely trzy lata, trzy lata szmat czasu, pasmo

nieprzerwanych cierpien. W ten oto dzien to zn. dnia 28-go

Tewet, widze Ciebie i Twoje ostatnie chwile.....

Czy wiesz ile sie w moim zyciu zmienilo od tej pamietnej daty 28-go

Tewet 1943 rok, czy znasz gehenne naszego zycia? Powiedz Tato, odezwij

sie. Chce Cie znow slyszec, chce Cie znow miec przy sobie. Byc znow w

Twoich ramionach, piescic i calowac jak male dziecko, i mowic, mowic,

mam przeciez tyle spraw z Toba do umowienia, tyle spraw o ktorych nie

moge i nie mam z kim mowic. O takich sprawach dla, ktorych wyro-

zumienie masz tylko Ty Tato ,i na ktore odpowiedziec potrafisz tylko

Ty-nikt inny tylko Ty. W tej chwili slyszes jak mowisz te tak dobre mi

znane slowa: "Twoj Tato to jest wielki power, chlop, nic nie umie"-

a mowisz to tak powaznie, ze obcy gotow w to uwierzyc. Tato, ale

przeciez ja Cie znam- ja wiem, ze jest innaczej. Czy pamietasz co ja w

takich chwilach robilam? Zawsze Cie tak mocno przyciskalam do siebie i

wybuchalam smiechem. Ty zas zes zawsze odpowiadzial: "Tak przeciez

jest, przeciez naprawde nic nie umiem". Jakie to bylo mile Tatuchno.

Tatko Kochany ile lat mojego zycia oddalabym dzis, bym mogla znow

uslyszec te niezapominiane slowa. Tato wiesz przeciez o tym, ze Cie

zawsze kochalam nad zycie. Ze zawsze mowilam, ze takiego drugiego nie

ma. Zawsze widzialam w Tobie wszystko, caly swiat, dzis zas cenie Cie

tysiackrotnie wiecej. Dzis przekonalam sie, ze moje zdanie o Tobie

jest i bylo zawsze sluszne. Niestety takich jak Ty ziemia wiecej nie

urodzi, nigdy, przenigdy, tacy ludzie bywaja tylko raz na widowni

swiata.

W tej chwili widze cmentarz lodzki i Twoja osamotniona mogilke, na tle

olbrzymiego cmentarza, no i mnie siedzaca. Tato wrocilam z piekla

wrocilam z ognia, wrocilam do Ciebie, sadzilam, ze tutaj wlasnie, to prawdziwe wyzwolenie, ze nad Twoja mogila, spotkam moje mame, moja siostre, i moich ukochanych braci. Ze Twoja mogila bedzie tym punktem naszego spotkania, ze Ty nasz wszystkich polaczysz. Leider, wrocilam, ale co mnie spotkalo?? Gorzkie rozczarowanie, zastalam osamotniona mogile, ktorej pomnik prawie, ze juz lezal na ziemi, pochytil sie nad Toba, na znak zaloby. Ze jestes naprawde tak sam, jak nikt, ze znikl rod Flattauow, ktorych ojcem byles Ty Icku Aronie, Ty skarbie najdrozszy. Przykryla Cie tablica, tak by jej nikt czytac nie musial, bo poco Twoich juz niema, wiec co? Prawda, na kim Ci zalezy, jezeli nie przede wszystkim na Twoich dzieciach i Twojej zonie?

Niestety oni wszyscy nie zyja, oni wrocic nie moga, i juz nie wroca---- Wrocilam tylko ja, i co tylko ja, gdzie reszta? Gdy o tym pomyslam czulam, ze i zemnie jest niepotrzebny czlowiek, ze zemnie jest przybleda, ktorej miejsce powinno byc gdzie indziej, a nie w szeregach ludzi normalnych, ktorych celem. jes walka o zycie.

Tato jak bardzo bylaby szczesliwa, gdybym w tej oto chwili mogla byc przy Tobie, jezeli nie mowic to przynajmniej, polozyc sie na tym nasypie najdrozszych moich zwlok. Przynajmniej przesiaknac Twoim zapachem wetchnac. Wyplakac sie jak male dziecko, bo niestety tego zostalam pozbawiona, placz nalezy u mnie do rzadkosci. Tak jak zreszta w tej chwili: "Jakby ktos mnie sciskal za gardlo, dlawia mnie lzy, a ujscia nie maja, wiem ze skamienialam, zdziczalam. Tatko Kochany jak trudno me zyc, zlituj sie, dopomoz mi w jakikolwiek sposob, ulzyj mi, takbym tak bardzo nie cierpiala. Wiesz przeciez, ze poza moim domem nie widzialam nikogo, wiesz o tym jak bardzo jeszcze po dzis dzien Cie ubustwialam.

Ty byles, jesteś i będziesz zawsze mienikiem wszystkiego, człowieczeństwa, dobra, piękna, szlachetności.

Od brudów Tatuchno, uciekam w dalszym ciągu, jak to robiłam za Twoich czasów, za Twego życia. Niestety tak trudno, tak trudno, gdyż ta tak zwana "Zła Droga" jest wytyczna i gwiazda przewodnia ludzkości. Pamiętam Twoje słowa, które jeszcze dziś dzwonią mi w uszach, nuta niezapomnianej symfonii: "Przez zło człowiek zostaje porwany, człowiek zawsze idzie z prądem nie namyślając się wcale nad czynem, idzie ślepo nie widząc wcale, że abacza z drogi". Tak Tatuchno Kochany, nie sadz, że Twoja nauka poszła w las, nie myśl, że K.Z.lager, zmienił i wpłynął na mnie, że zmienił Twoje wskazówki, Twoje słowa, które były i będą dla mnie zawsze sterem w życiu. Ty nie wyczerpane źródło mądrości, czemu dziś Ciebie nie ma przy mnie? Dziś gdy jestem tak bardzo sama, a ludzie tak bardzo źli, czemu dziś Ciebie nie ma przy mnie?..... Czyżbym naprawdę była stworzona tylko do męczeństwa, do cierpienia, aczkolwiek może naprawdę sobie na to zasłużyłam.....może nie powinnam wyjść z wagonów, a wówczas to wszystko co dziś przeżywam nie miałoby miejsca, odpocząłabym na wieki....bo czynem jest życie bez Ciebie Tato, bez Was, czy kiedykolwiek to się zmieni? Słuszna była moja rozpacz w chwili gdyś nas opościli, odczułam tragedię w powietrzu, wyczułam ją jeszcze za Twojego życia.

Pamiętam czarny wóz, pamiętam przeprowadzkę, pamiętam Twoje łóżko i Ciebie w pustym pokoju przy ul. Zgierskiej 48, tu znowu Ciebie widzę w nowym mieszkaniu przy ul. Franciszkowskiej 36, no i kolosalna poprawa zdrowia. Widzę Twoją chęć do życia, na tle moich istotnych czarnych wizji. W takich chwilach przykładalam ucho do Twojej piersi, chcąc się

przekonac, ze to nieprawda, ze to tylko zludzenie. Obsypywalm Cie pocalunkami, a Ty wzbraniales sie jak niemowle, nie wiedziales co jest powodem mojego zachowania sie. Tatuchno Kochany, juz wtedy chcialam sie nacieszyc i nasycic Toba (na zapas), nasycic, nasycic, ale niestety Nadszedl dzien kiedy wyrwano Cie nam, nam tak z Toba zrosnietych, tak z Toba nigdy nie rozlanczalnych i to bylo mozliwe, jeszcze po dzis dzien nie rozumiem. Wyrwano Cie nam, tak jak sie wyrywa niemowle z wnetrznosci kobiety. Zabrano Cie nam ale mnie Tatuchno, ja zawsze jestem przy Tobie. Zawsze porownuje wszystkich do Ciebie, jaka mam na na to odpowiedz wiesz chyba z gory.....Zawsze i wszedzie jestem mysla przy Tobie, aczkolwiek swiadomosc tego, ze Ciebie niema, ze Ty naprawda nie zyjesz, sprawia mi taki bol, ze wogole nie sposob opisac.

Przyznac sie musze, ze ta sprawa, ktora nieobecność Twoja jest przyczyna, sprawia mi przyjemność. Ciagle jeszcze slysze jak mowisz: "No to co, ze cierpie, przeciez jestem Zydem, a Zydzi cierpia, dlaczego ja mam byc wyjatkiem'. Dzis to wszystko rozumiem, dzis rozumiem znaczenie nastepnych slow, ktore brzmialy dla mnie tak dziwnie, tak glupio, ktore wydawaly mi sie nie na miejscu, dzis staly sie aktualne, a mianowicie: "Wierzcie mi dzieci, ze nie potrafie sie smiac".

Dzis przezywam to na wlasnej skorze, czuje i rozumiem i znaczenie w calej okazalosci. Jak bardzo mi Cie brak Ty moj Prometeuszu, Ty zniczu moich marzen, takich uczuc jakie zywie do Ciebie chyba nikt nie jest w stanie komus oddac, nikt nie potrafi dac tyle ciepla ile ja Tobie prawda? "ALTYCZKIE" Czy przyznajesz?-----Czemu jestes tak daleko, czemu nie jestes przy mnie w tak krytycznej chwili, chwili kiedy Cie nikt nie moze zastapic, kiedy nikt nie potrafi mi tego dac co Ty.... nikt napewno nikt-napewno juz wile razy szlam na kompromis, an

ustępstwa, już wiele razy próbowałam, chciałam sobie pomóc, ale niestety nigdy mi się nie udało i wątpię w to bym kiedykolwiek mogła osiągnąć....., bo nikt Ciebie zastąpić nie może i nikt Cię w żaden sposób nie potrafi zastąpić, Ty królewiczu dobra, piękna, mądrości, wiedzy, wogóle wszelkiego dobra.

W dzień Twojej śmierci jestem przy Tobie myślą, duszą i wogóle całą swoją osobą. Tato jakie to straszne, że nie ma Mamusi, Lajsera, Chaima, Reginki dlaczego, dlaczego nie mogą dziś stanąć z całą rodziną nad Twoim grobem, dlaczego nie mają Twoich synów by mogli zgłomować Kadysz? Dlaczego ma to odmawiać człowiek Ci zupełnie obcy, który może nie zasłużył? Dzisiaj czuję się tak bardzo samotna, tak bardzo sama. Jak miło i dobrze byłoby w tej chwili usiąść przy stole i podyskutować, kłócić się, kłócić z powodu różnych poglądów, pamiętasz te chwile, kiedy byłam tak podniecona w takich chwilach. Jak bardzo Cię chciałam przekonać a Ty zawsze byłeś góra i mówiłeś: urwis, chłopie, co się stało czy może, czy może jesteś chłopcem, poczym zwyklesz mówić, nie szkodzi to należy do zdrowych objawów.

Tatuchno Kochany co za straszny ból, ale jak mi dobrze w tej chwili, gdy sobie te oto fakty przypominam, jak Cię blisko czuję, Tatko. Co za straszny ból, że tylko ja w ten oto błogi i wielki dzień mogę oddać Ci część i to też nie zupełnie, bo noddlitwy nie mogę zmówić. Zapalając świecę, miałam przed oczyma nasz dom, naszą idylę, nasz jasny nigdy niezapomniany przytułek, nasze gniazdo ciepła, dobra, mądrości i wiedzy, optymizmu, no i Ciebie królewiczu, Ciebie tronuującego. Tak bardzo mi ciążko Tatuchno Kochany, tak nie mogę i nie mam miejsca sama. Gdzie się wszyscy podzieli, gdzie? na samą myśl o tym dławie się. Czemu ja, ausgerechnet ja. Czy dlatego, że Cię tak bardzo kochałam i Kocham?

//

Tak dobrze mi dzisiaj z tymi cierpieniami, tak pełno mi dziś z Toba, gdziekolwiek się spojrzę Tato, pełno Ciebie, Twojej osoby, Twoich myśli, Twoich słów, wogóle Ciebie Tato. Czemu jestem sama, czy zawsze tak było? Czy zawsze byłam sierotą, okragłą sierotą? Gdzie Moja Mama? Gdzie moi najdrożsi bracia? No wreszcie gdzie moje ukochane "Rudziatko", ten nigdy niezapomniany brzdac? Tak--dobrze ja wiem dlaczego Tato, Tato Kochany, przyjdź wytłumacz mi tak bym zrozumiała jak zawsze w innych mi trudnych chwilach, gdy ich nie rozumiałam, gdy potrzebowałam oparcia, podpory. Przyjdź i wyrwij mnie z matni grzeszawiska, z gruntu, który ze prawie usuwa mi się z nog.....

Jestem już naprawdę dość dorosła, a jednak - czuję się chwilami tak bezradna jak małe dziecko, któremu trzeba torować drogę w życiu, bo po prostu nie potrafię sobie pomóc. Staję beczynna i czekam, czego? i kogo? - nie wiem. Wiem, że inaczej nie potrafię, wiem że jestem sama wciąż sama. Wiem że przy najlepszych i najszczerzych znajomych będę wlecznie sama, co może nie jest ich winą, ale samo przez się tak się składa.

Chwilami mam wrażenie, że znam życie tak doskonale jak nikt, że nikt i nic nie potrafi mnie skłamać, że jestem przezorna, ale niestety - nie prawda. Dochodzę to wniosku, że jestem bardzo naiwna, że ślepo wierzę ludziom (przy moim braku zaufania). Skutkiem czego, ciągle przekonywuję się o większym swinstwie, ciągle poznaję życie z tej najprawdziwszej strony, staram się wszystko tłumaczyć, ale niestety.....

Czy kiedykolwiek zdawałam sobie sprawę co to zn. słowa, sam, osamotnienie i wogóle co to jest samotność, czy byłam w stanie zrozumieć? Otoż nie – nigdy---. Właśnie przeżycia są szkoła życia, a wszystko inne to teoria nic więcej, reszta to wrażeń ładnie wymawiane. Wiem, że istnieją również tacy ludzie, którzy potrafią pomóc i to zupełnie bezinteresownie, że są gotowi zrobić maximum na co może się zdobyć człowiek. Ale pomyśl Hanko przez chwilę, jak Ty się w tej roli czujesz? Jakie jest Twoje samopoczucie?

Pamiętam drogę do Polski i moją obawę przed tym co mnie w istocie spotkało i co było moją największą boleć, czego się najbardziej białam i brzydziłam.

Mój Boże czemuż tak się stało? Czemu nie potrafię sobie zarobić na swoje utrzymanie, na swój żywot? Czemu ja nie mam zawodu?

Czy zawsze muszę być pasorzytem? I tylko korzystać od kogoś?

Przecież do niedawna było inaczej – ja ludzi wspomagałam.

Jak szybko człowiek może się znaleźć pod wozem. Czy naprawdę, jedynnym wyjściem takich dziewcząt jest tylko zamazanie? Czy innego rozwiązania dla mnie niema?

Jestem już naprawdę dorosła, jednak - czuję się chwilami tak bezradna, jak małe dziecko, toremu trzeba torować drogę w życiu, bo po prostu nie potrafię sobie pomóc, staje beczynnie i czekam - czego? i kogo? - nie wiem. Wiem, że inaczej nie potrafię. Wiem, że jestem sama, wciąż sama, wiem, że przy najlepszych i najszczerzych znajomych będę wiecznie sama, co może nie jest ich wina, ale sama przez się tóka się składa. Chwilami mam wrażenie, że znam życie tak doskonale jak nikt, że nikt i nic niepotrafi mnie skłamać, że jestem przezorna, le niestety nie prawda. Dochodzę do wniosku, że jestem bardzo naiwna, że ślepo wierzę ludzom (przy moim braku zaufania). Skutkiem czego ciągle przekonuję się o większym swinstwie, ciągle poznaję życie z tej najprawdziwszej strony, staram się wszystko tłumaczyć, ale niestety.....

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jest tylko zamazpojscie? Czy dla mnie innego rozwiązanie niema?

Dlaczego czy tylko dlatego, że nikogo nie skrzywdziłam, że starałam się
isc wszystkim na reke, przyjs z pomocą. Odpowiedzi na to nie potrafie
znaleśc. Jedynie wiem, że ponosze wine, bo w żadnym wypadku nie powinnam
wyjsc z wagonu, a wówczas miałabym spokój, taki o którym dziś tak
bardzo marze. Gdy o tym pomyśle, gardze sobą, jak nikt na świecie...
Gardze że jestem tak naiwna tak łatwowierna. Zapominam o tym, że ludzie
współczesni należa do tego typu ludzi, którzy jedno myślą, drugie mówią
trzęcie czynią. Wszystko razem nigdy nie idzie w parze, zawsze są
osobne, jak rzeczy zupełnie niezależne od siebie, zawsze same dla
siebie oto jest sukces dwudziestego wieku.

Pamiętaj Hanko, że liczyć należy tylko na siebie i że należy zebrac
wszystkie siły tak by móc coś osiągnąć, w przeciwnym razie, czeka Cię
jedna i ta sama przyszłość.

Pamiętaj Hanko poki czas, weź się do rzeczy, poki czas, bo nadejdzie
pora, że będzie zapóźno. Bądź na moment energiczna zapomnij na chwilę,
że jesteś kobieta i stan do czynu jak mężczyzna
to są istotne słowa, tych oto słów niezapominaj, one są treścią i
podstawą życia. Zapomnij na chwilę, że kiedyś było inaczej, właśnie
dlatego, że znajdujesz się w tak specyficznych warunkach. Powinnas
czynić, bo niestety znów te oto trzy litery sam, jestem sama nikt Cię
nie wyreczy, musisz o wszystko dbać sama, bo wszyscy są tym samym
dotknięci. Niestety każdy musi stanąć do walki z jutrem.... Czy chce, czy
nie chce, czy chce żyć czy nie.

DER ZISER CHOLEM

Ich bin hejmloze kind,
Fun der orimer gas,
Majn fmilie ceblozen hot der wind.
Der sziksal gemacht zich a szpas.
Sztej ich ejnsam farscholemt
Fartrojert, farszmacht
In der szejner, heler lwone nacht.

Ich szlof mir ajn a mider
Tog, kum mit mer curik
Mit fdajn gemejnem szreklichn blik.
Ch'wil trojmen un fargesen di cajt
Wos gewesen mit jahren curik
Dos gewesene - in ajnzamkajt.

Of a wajl bin ich gliklech
Un ojch mutik un fraj
In a land wu ,em dint nor
Der arbeit getraj.
Wu men wejst nit fun kejn knecht
Fun kajn caar un kejn pajn
Men kert nit dos szrekliche jammer-gewein

kumt der to mit zajn wor
Und szlept mich wider ojf der gas,
Baj di hor.....

